

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

March 2002

#1641 Vol. 99 No. 2

\$1.00 / 75 p



Profits or People? Two world visions clash

Thousands of protesters trudged between rows of New York City riot cops Feb. 1 - 3, protesting the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum. The WEF, normally held in Davos, Switzerland, relocated to New York City to escape growing protests targeting this gathering of the rich and powerful to discuss their vision for our future.

Police closed off more than a dozen blocks around the swanky Waldorf Astoria Hotel to ensure that our rulers would not be confronted by their victims. They attacked protesters with clubs, mace and tear gas, and arrested scores of activists for daring to step outside the truncheon-lined protest pits.

Meanwhile, in Porto Alegre, Brazil, tens of thousands met for the second World Social Forum, bringing together

workers, landless peasants, environmentalists and other activists to discuss the pressing issues given only lip service, at best, by the 2,700 corporate executives, government officials and celebrities invited to the World Economic Forum.

New York City police were determined to crush even the most tepid signs of dissent. When the AFL-CIO organized a Global Workers Forum on a workday afternoon in a hall seating just 400 people, police refused to issue a permit for a "March for Global Justice" planned to follow the meeting. Instead, the AFL agreed to picket a Fifth Avenue Gap store, ringed by hundreds of police.

Twelve to 15,000 activists converged on New York City Feb. 2, demonstrating that we have not forgotten the twin menaces of neoliberalism and corporate globalization.

Meanwhile, in Porto Alegre, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions Assistant General Secretary Mamounata Cissé told the World Social Forum: "The free market model of globalization has failed the world's workers... Inequalities are widening everywhere – between poor and rich, between women and men, between governments and the international economic institutions, and between the developing and the industrialized countries."

Fouad Benseddik of the UMT in Morocco condemned the complicity of many governments in the violation of workers' rights. Alex Aguilar from the TUCP (Philippines) reported that 99 percent of companies surveyed in export processing zones were found to be violating minimum wage standards.

Union representatives from Georgia and Estonia spoke of the grave social and economic situation in the former East Bloc countries, while Tandiwe Munyanyi from ZCTU (Zimbabwe) condemned IMF and World Bank policies that cause grave economic problems for developing countries. Austin Muneku from the ICFTU's regional organization for Africa noted that, "Poverty and unemployment is creating continued on page 9

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Industrial Worker PO Box 13476 Philadelphia, PA 19101

ISSN 0019-8870 ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Periodicals Postage PAID Philadelphia, PA and additional mailing offices

Subscribers: The number (top line) reflects the last issue due on your subscription

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Selling Futures:

"New" economy goes down in flames

ENRONomics 101

BY MORGAN MILLER

The collapse of the international energy-trading racket Enron is a scandal in a scandalous system. Here is a company which exemplifies everything which is loathsome in modern capitalism as if capitalism isn't loathsome enough. Moreover, the subsequent disclosures of its dealings give an excellent insight into the workings of the new world economic order.

Enron was founded in 1985 as a merger of two Texas oil pipeline companies. Enron founder and CEO Ken Lay led a company which encouraged and took advantage of the neo-liberal agenda of deregulated markets. Enron grew to be the seventh largest company based in the US with revenue of \$101 billion. Enron's had operations in 30-odd countries and accounted for 20% of energy trading in Europe and the US. Enron also had entered into trading in other sectors of the economy, including communications bandwidth, paper pulp and water.

While maintaining energy generation and distribution networks, most of Enron's growth came from the buying and selling of energy futures. This practice, buying "futures" of not-yet-generated power or resources (oil, natural gas, etc.) to sell at a later time, combined with a deregulated market, allowed for unprecedented levels of corruption and manipulation worldwide.

Buying futures requires large amounts of borrowed money coming from loans from financial institutions as well as from sales of stock. Such investments are predicated on confidence in the company. So Enron was very much like a classic pyramid scheme. The more you get others involved, the more profits you have. But at a certain point everyone has a Bugs Bunny epiphany, like a character from a cartoon you can run on air as long as you don't look down. When you notice reality, you fall.

The Con Game

"Enron was not much of a company, but its executives made sure it was one hell of a stock." – NY Times

The best description of Enron comes from Karl Marx, who once described speculators as the lumpen-bourgeoisie, the ruling class' equivalent of cut-throats and muggers. The con game developed by Enron was complex but centered on two complementary strategies.

First was the buying of political influence to promote the neo-liberal agenda of privatized, unregulated markets. In this Enron was second to none. It is now well known that Enron was the single largest contributor to George W. Bush's election campaign and he flew in Enron-loaned planes. Most of Bush's cabinet is also linked to Enron as investors, consultants, etc.

Wendy Gramm, wife of Texas Republican Senator Phil Gramm, joined the Enron board in 1993. This appointment occurred five weeks after the Commodities Futures Trading Commission, which she then headed, issued a ruling exempting energy continued on page 6

British caravan builders line up with IWW

The IWW has just begun an organising drive among caravan makers in Hull, a large city on Britain's North Sea coast. (Caravans are house trailers designed to be pulled along by cars.)

Local union activists joined the IWW after months of deliberation following a series of sellouts by regional officers of the building workers union, UCATT.

Over a period of two weeks the IWW established a significant foothold in the industry, organising 16 of 25 workers in one factory and 10 in another. The latter drive is very significant as it is at a company called ABI, which employs 200. The entire UCATT shop committee is thought to have resigned to join the IWW, forming the nucleus of Construction Workers IU 330 in the factory. With no shop stewards, UCATT is likely to collapse and many if not all the UCATT members (90 percent of the workers) are likely to join the IWW.

The next stage will be to try to organise the entire caravan building industry, which is entirely based in Hull and employs 2,000 workers.

Employers have already indicated that they will negotiate with whichever union has the majority in the factory.

Hull IWW members are not simply looking at the caravan industry. As respected former trade union organisers, the IWW branch has links with a variety of union agitators and organisers throughout the city and further recruitment activity is expected soon.

The short organising drive culminated in a meeting on 7 February to discuss the

formation of IU 330 in the city and the creation of a GMB for non IU 330 members whose focus will be on organising and agitating. The meeting was addressed by representatives from the IWW General Executive Board and the Regional Organising Committee, as well as the organiser of IU 330. New members heard about the IWW's worldwide activity and about the fundamental differences between the IWW and trade unions.

The IWW members have been involved in support action for the Hull pilots who have been on strike for three months. Only a few days before the meeting a ship guided into the port by a scab pilot ran aground sustaining severe damage.

Hull has a strongly independent union history. George Harvey, industrial unionist from the North East of England, mentioned the existence of a strong IWW organisation in the docks in 1916. The IWW was particularly strong in ports such as Hull and there had been branches in the Yorkshire area since the union's appearance in there UK in 1906.

Joe Hill first learned English while travelling between Scandinavia and Hull before emigrating to the USA, although there is no evidence he met any IWWs.

The organising drive in Hull comes at a time when the IWW in Britain is undergoing some growth. Groups are springing up in Yorkshire, Glasgow and the IU 640 branch in Dorset continues to operate. London members meet monthly and there is interest in the union in the North East of England and the South West too.

A satisfying start to 2002.

the couriers are revolting!

BY PAT S., VANCOUVER GMB Vancouver Wobs hosted a workshop for bike messengers on August 25. The theme of this conference was "The Couriers Are Revolting," a title taken from a pamphlet made by messengers in London, England about organizing bike messengers (and available from the IWW Literature Dept.). We had

asked messengers from the Portland IWW and San Francisco Bike Messenger Association (SFBMA) to come up and talk about what was going on in their cities. (We held off on this report until Portland was ready to go public – see article last issue.)

Messengers in these cities are organizing to improve their working conditions. The conference was an opportunity for them to share their ideas, thoughts, and experiences with others. We were basically putting those who were organized together with those who weren't and wanted to be.

Messengers have an advantage that other workers don't. They interact with other messengers and more people in a day than most others do in a lifetime. (Ok, maybe I'm exaggerating a bit, but it's pretty darn close.) Therefore the opportunity to organize (industrially) is much greater than, say, the millions of restaurant workers out there.

Also, the financial industry (banks, insurance, payroll, etc.) relies very heavily on bike messengers to maintain their operations. Most messenger companies are owned or are subsidiaries of these institutions, which are essential to their very survival. As a result, messengers are well positioned to organize to improve work conditions. (Check out the Citysplinter website when you get a chance; it's very informative and inspiring: http:// www.citysplinter.com)

There was a lot of media interest. CBC

radio (our state media...like NPR crossed talked about how the SFBMA organizes al-

Terminal City newspaper (alternative weekly entertainment) all wanted to know about messengers organizing. Several bike messengers came out early Saturday morning. Instead of sleeping in or mountain biking, they thought it was worth it to come down and hear what messers in other cities were doing.

We started off by having everyone introduce themselves. That got a little sidetracked as everyone was eager to share their stories and hear what the others had to say. The Portland Messers took up as facilitator and everyone got into it.

The Vancouver messers explained their problems: shitty pay for tags, increased competition that was forcing tags down, high turnover rates at certain companies, bureaucratic licencing laws, police harassment, the ruling by British Columbia Employment Standards that bike messers are employees, not independent contractors, even though drivers still are IC's (basically a trade-off messers' equipment is now paid for by the companies but they lost their tax exemption status). Portland messers explained that most of those issues were the same in their city (and globally). They explained that the only way to improve working conditions was to organize industry-wide, like what they are doing now in Portland, and that it was important to include drivers, dispatchers and walkers in any organizing.

Bernie explained what the San Fran messers had done to improve their condition by organizing with the ILWU. He also

with NBC), CFRO co-operative radio and ley cats, parties, and benefits among other things to build solidarity.

> After a slight disaster at lunch (the KoolAid didn't have any sugar, and was undrinkable) everyone exchanged contact info and passed out literature. The Vancouver messers had organized a little alleycat and Bernie and the Portland IWW helped out. After that everyone went to the Brickyard

for a few and partied the night away.

Vancouver messers now have options. I would like to thank the Portland IWW messengers who came up to share their stories and ideas. Same with the SFMBA and Bernie. I would also like to thank Natasha from Citysprint. And last but not least, the Vancouver messers who came out and made the conference a success.

The perils of gardening

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the on-the-job fatality rate for police is lower than that for gardeners, electricians, truck drivers, garbage collectors, construction workers, airline pilots, timber cutters, and commercial fisherman. In fact, fishermen have an occupational fatality rate that is fifteen times higher than that for cops, but rarely do we hear those who provide us with an endless supply of mahi-mahi described

However, toy stores are now selling an "Officer West" action figure, modeled after a member of the Los Angeles police department, endorsed by the LA police union, and made by sweatshop labor in China.

A hint of direct action gets results on construction job

Recently in Portland, a couple of IWWfriendly Carpenters were forced to defend their contract against the sub-contractor they were working for.

A number of UBC (Carpenters) and LIUNA (Laborers) union members were doing finishing work on a new Target store. One of the Carpenters hurt his back and was sent home for the day. He wasn't at work the next day, but two temps from Labor Ready were. Finding they were non-union workers, in violation of the contract, the UBCs called their business agent and asked him to stand up to the sub-contractor. He said it wasn't a UBC job even though the temps replaced a **UBC** member!

If the BA wasn't going to defend it was up to the rank and file. They came up with a plan. At lunch they started talking loud to make sure the boss would overhear. They discussed the situation regarding the temps and decided that if the LIUNA members picketed they wouldn't cross the line.

Shortly after lunch the UBC BA arrived unannounced at the worksite to meet with the contractor and sub-contractor. The temps were sent home and the next day there were new LIUNA and UBC members working their rightful jobs.

May Day Greeting Ads

We traditionally run May Day greeting ads in our May issue. These must be received by April 4. Rates: \$10 for one column inch, \$25 for three, \$70 for 1/16 page (4" by 2 col.s), \$120 for a quarter page. Extra copies of the May issue are also available at modest cost (if arranged in advance).

Industrial Worker

The Voice of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism

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Official newspaper of the **Industrial Workers** of the World

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ISSN 0019-8870 Periodicals postage paid Philadelphia, PA and other mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: Industrial Worker, POB 13476, Phila. PA 19101 USA

Individual Subscriptions: \$15

Library Subs: \$20/year (Member sub included in dues) http://parsons.iww.org/~iw

Published ten times per year printed by Teamsters union labor



Articles not so designated do not reflect the official position of the IWW. Contributions welcome.

Press Date: February 11, 2002

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Seattle office workers go Wobbly

BY DAVID GRENIER

Office workers at Seattle's natural food grocery store Madison Market won the right to be represented by IU660 Feb. 5 when their boss made an about-face and voluntarily recognized the union after initially rejecting the workers' petition and mounting an extremely weak and short-lived anti-union campaign.

The organizing effort was spurred by a fellow worker who had previously worked in the produce department of the market and been covered under the shop-floor workers' United Food & Commercial Workers contract. Her three years in that role included nine months as shop steward, but when she began to experience back and neck problems she accepted an office position as the store's payroll clerk. However, the office workers were the only non-union, non-management positions in the organization. As "at will" employees they could be fired at any time for any reason, or no reason.

Although this fellow worker felt she had a good working relationship with her boss, she still wanted the protection of a union contract in case he left the organization or their relationship soured. Within a few months of moving "upstairs" (from the shop floor to the office) she joined the IWW and set about trying to organize her colleagues.

The office at Madison Market is fairly small. There are only three non-management workers. She quickly ascertained that one of her colleagues was anti-union, but the other was also interested in organizing. This second fellow worker also took out a red card and the two began to plan their strategy for winning union recognition.

Before they could act, the boss let them know that he intended to "outsource" the third worker - ironically the only office worker against organizing. Worried that their jobs might also be in jeopardy, the two Wobs decided to move quickly.

On January 25th they asked the boss to voluntarily recognize the union. Worried about damaging a good working relationship and hurting the feelings of a person they thought was a genuinely nice guy, they stressed that it wasn't personal. They reiterated that they simply wanted the right to collectively bargain a contract that would give them some job protection and put their wages and benefits in writing.

They were surprised at his reaction. Madison Market is a consumer cooperative, ostensibly committed to the values of democracy. Their boss says he values their work a claim he repeated immediately before they presented their IWW union authorization cards. Sadly, he not only refused to recognize their decision to organize a union, but he refused even to take them seriously or give them a timeline as to when he would address their concerns. All of this is ironic because later he would say that they should have "come to [him] first." They did go to him first, and he left them no option but to go the bureaucratic route and file a petition with the National Labor Relations Board.

Over the next week and a half the fellow workers learned what Portland organizer Bill Bradley meant when he told them, "Beware the 'good boss' scorned." The Monday after their first union conversation, this man with whom they once had a friendly working relationship stormed into the office, literally threw some papers at one of the Wobblies, and yelled, "What the hell is this?" He was upset because the UFCW shop steward had circulated a letter to the shop-floor staff informing them of the IWW organizing effort upstairs. The boss then pulled the fellow worker who began the campaign into his office and asked her to close the door. When she asked for her legal Weingarten rights, he refused. He then proceeded to threaten to replace both IWW members with management positions.

Management took every available opporcontinued on page 4

Upstate NY Wobs rally for peace

One group of marchers shouted, "Peace Now!" Another answered, "Stop the War!" We continued this collective call-and-response chant for the bulk of the march as the 70 of us wound our way down the sidewalk, through the park, and back to the front of the O'Brien Federal Building in Albany, N.Y., on a cold and gray afternoon Jan. 5.

FW Pete Tsaffaras and I led the march with our IWW branch banner. There was no question that the IWW should lead the march: we organized it, as well as the 90minute rally which immediately preceded the brief procession. This rally against the war in Afghanistan and in defense of civil liberties at home represented the largest action staged by our branch in recent memory, certainly since we formed our GMB in 1999. The event symbolized a high-water mark for our branch's organizing efforts among the broader left in the Capital Region and the Hudson Valley of New York state.

"The action was successful in terms of having a consistent message and bringing people together from diverse geographic areas," said FW Greg Giorgio, speaker, emcee and key organizer of the event. "We started the rally off with a strong pro-labor and anticapitalist message that people were receptive to," Giorgio continued.

Giorgio began the rally by reading the IWW's official statement on September 11, approved by the General Executive Board and published in the General Organization Bulletin. In the statement, the IWW expresses our collective grief at the loss of life on Sept. 11, but also opposes militarism, nationalism and the increase of military and state power "promoted by the capitalist class and its representatives in governments around the

The rally called for reparations and humanitarian aid to the Afghan people, repeal of the Patriot Act, freedom for detainees held for questioning in the U.S., and an end to



FWs Pete Tsaffaras (L) and Nick Patti lead the march.

PHOTO: SOURDOUGH SLIM

further acts of aggression in the name of the 9/11 victims. Speakers ranged from Louise Roback of the Albany Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union to members of the Ironweed Collective, a local anarchist group, with all shades of ideological positions represented in between.

Our local IWW branch collected 26 blankets for donation to Afghan relief through Feed the Hungry, an Afghan NGO, and for donation to local homeless organizations. We received press on local television news and in local print media.

Bay Area organizing conference

The San Francisco Bay Area and Santa Barbara General Membership Branches are sponsoring an organizing conference the weekend of March 23rd, in conjunction with the IWW's Organizer Training Committee.

Speakers from campaigns in Portland and from the OTC and the General Executive Board will lead workshops aimed at developing an industrial organizing strategy for the region. Housing is available for members coming from out of town.

Bay Area Wobs are also launching a

shorter workweek campaign and planning a forum on the history of FBI and government repression of the IWW in conjunction with the ongoing Bari/Cherney lawsuit against the government stemming from the attempted assassination of these IWW activists.

A member of Bay Area Electronic Communications Workers IU560 has built a new server at <media.iww.org> featuring live news feeds and other useful information about labor, progressive politics and activism.

excerpted from Bay Area newsletter

Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Join the IWW Today

he IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially – that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers' ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

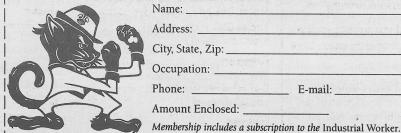
We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses' orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

TO JOIN: Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month's dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 13476, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

Initiation is the same as one month's dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income. If your monthly income is under \$1,000, dues are \$6 a month. If your monthly income is between \$1,000 - \$2,000, dues are \$12 a month. If your monthly income is over \$2,000 a month, dues are \$18 a month.

- ☐ I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer
- ☐ I agree to abide by the IWW constitution
- ☐ I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes.



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!Yo No Quiero Taco Bell! - Chicago.

PHOTO: ROBERT HOPPER

Taco Bell Truth Tour

Members of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers will be on tour this month to build public support for their campaign to pressure Taco Bell to recognize its responsibility for the miserable conditions facing the workers who pick its tomatoes.

"Long gone are the days when small family farmers supplied area stores and chains with locally-grown tomatoes in season," the CIW notes. "Today, huge corporate growers with multi-state operations sell tomatoes year round to even bigger corporate buyers, including fast food mega-chains like Taco Bell and Burger King. Those fast food giants receive cheap, high-quality U.S. tomatoes, thanks to the sacrifices of thousands of hard-working Florida farmworkers who pick tomatoes at a piece rate that has remained virtually unchanged for over two decades."

Farmers say they can not afford to pay workers a living wage because of the low prices these corporations pay. So workers are demanding that companies like Taco Bell demand changes in the shameful pay and working conditions suffered by the men and women who pick their tomatoes.

Taco Bell is part of Tricon Global Restaurants, Inc., together with Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut. These three major chains control more than 30,000 restaurants around the globe. Tricon's system-wide sales reached nearly \$22 billion in 1999, with more than \$1.2 billion in operating profit.

Taco Bell is a major client of the Immokalee-based Six I's Packing Co, one of the biggest tomato producers in the United States. Indeed, fresh tomatoes are a featured component of many of Taco Bell's best-selling products. Given the volume of Immokalee tomatoes it buys to supply its worldwide operations, Taco Bell has the power to help bring about more equitable labor relations in Immokalee's tomato fields.

If Taco Bell were to press Six L to negotiate seriously with farmworkers, it would have to listen. And if Taco Bell were to voluntarily pay just 1 cent more per pound, and the growers were to pass that penny along to the pickers, that one penny could almost double the picking piece rate.

The Truth Tour will take workers to the following cities: Tampa, FL, Feb. 28; Atlanta, March 1; South Bend, IN, 3/2; Chicago 3/3; Madison 3/4; Denver 3/6; San Francisco 3/8; Fresno, CA, 3/9; Los Angeles 3/10; March on Taco Bell headquarters in Irvine 3/11; Flagstaff, AZ, 3/12; Albuquerque 3/13; Oklahoma City 3/14; Little Rock 3/15; Memphis 3/16.

For information about the Taco Bell boycott or the Taco Bell Truth Tour, contact the Coalition of Immokalee Workers at 941-821-5481 or IWW Headquarters at 215-763-1274.

Seattle office workers go Wobbly

continued from page 3

tunity over the next several days to harass or threaten the Wobblies in an attempt to get them to give up or quit. Although the stress was taking its toll, they had strong support from the shop-floor UFCW workers, from community members who wished them success, and even from the Board of Directors of the coop. Management was isolated in its anti-union stance.

Even in the face of harassment by management - harassment so bad that at one point a boss brought one worker to tears the Wobs kept trying to offer olive branches and hoped to mend the tattered "good relationship" they had with their boss before they stood up for themselves. At one point they gave him a card and candy and attempted to sit down and talk things over with him, but he rushed off to some other meeting. Later, after much deliberation, they even offered a compromise that was very painful for them: they would drop their IWW petition if management would recognize them as part of the UFCW contract that governed their brothers and sisters downstairs.

This compromise was difficult. The IWW wasn't just a random union they picked out of the phone book, they believe in its ideals of democracy, rank-and-file control, and workers being entitled to all they cre-

ate. However, they felt the compromise would still allow them union protection while addressing their boss' stated concern—that he already had to deal with two unions (two UFCW locals, one for the meat cutters, another for everyone else) and didn't have time to deal with a third. When their boss rejected even this compromise, and could offer no new reason for being against their union other than "you should have come to me first" (which they did), it was obvious that he was simply anti-union.

Surprisingly, two days later (and two days before an NLRB hearing) the boss called the Wobblies into a meeting with the managers. He opened in typical style by saying, "This is going to be a monologue, not a dialogue." He then berated them and the IWW for a while, but closed by saying that he was going to voluntarily recognize the union.

No one is quite sure what made him change his mind. He obviously didn't have a change of heart. Some workers think he was getting pressure from the Board. Others suspect that he was terrified of the NLRB process. Still others believe the strong solidarity between the UFCW workers and Wobblies was the determining factor.

Three things, however, are known:

The IWW won because the workers outorganized and outlasted a boss who was set against them.

This victory makes Madison Market the first IWW shop in Seattle in decades.

It won't be the last. Not by a long shot.

Wobs support Immokalee farmworkers

BY SOURDOUGH SLIM

The IWW's Upstate New York Regional GMB began the new year with a picket of an Albany Taco Bell to show solidarity with Florida's Coalition of Immokalee Workers boycott call against the fast food giant. It was the second action at the well-traveled Central Avenue location, Wobs taking advantage of the busy stretch in the rush hour period.

Visibility is certainly good, but leafleting is a tougher proposition under current conditions at the location. "Most of the actual business at this restaurant is via the 'drivethru' window. So we are sticking to the street right now in order to keep the pickets going, otherwise management will have the cops put a stop to the action," local delegate Greg Giorgio said. "But we do end each action with a visit, where we attempt to engage both customers and workers inside the

restaurant while handing out a few more flyers, much to the disapproval of the manager."

Out in the streets, the IWWs carry placards saying "!No Quiero!" and "Who Picks Taco Bell's Tomatoes?" Motorists and the passersby on the sidewalk have expressed support for the notion that farmworkers who slave for starvation works in the evil piece rate system imposed by Taco Bell's growers should have the right to organize.

Monthly actions are planned, and further outreach is underway to build more local support for the boycott.

The Upstate IWW is also busy with several other projects, including recruiting new members from the activist community, outreach with groups like the local Food Not Bombs in Albany, and will issue a pamphlet on a recent union-busting strike at the Finch-Pruyn paper mill in Glens Falls, N.Y.

Salt Lake Wobs fight U.S. terrorism

BY TONY ROEHRIG

On January 23rd, the Salt Lake City Wobs hosted a speaking tour by Father Roy Bourgeois, founder of SOA Watch. The SOA (School of the Americas) is a U.S. taxpayer funded, U.S. Army-run training camp for Latin American terrorists. Father Roy has been working for the past 12 years to close this 'school' down. He has spent four out of the past ten years in prison for his efforts.

The school's graduates are a who's who of Latin American dictators, torturers and assassins. In fact the poor of Latin America have dubbed this school the 'School of Assassins' and the 'School of Dictators.' Manuel Noriega was a graduate. Also Hugo Banzer, the Bolivian dictator responsible for calling out the military on the people when they took to the streets to protest the privatization of the Bolivian water supply by Bechtel in 2000. In the military riot a 17-year-old boy was killed.

Other graduates have taken part in the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero (El Salvador 1980), the rape and execution of four U.S. churchwoman (El Salvador 1980), the execution of the people of El Mozote in El Salvador in which over 800 civilians were systematically murdered, and many more atrocities. The targets of these trainees from the SOA are usually human rights workers, labor organizers, religious leaders and students.

Every November, on the anniversary of Fr. Romero's assassination people gather at the gates of Fort Benning in Columbus, Geor-

IWW wins Daily Grind by a whisker

Following an extremely nasty campaign including boss threats, layoffs, intimidation, and legal manipulation, workers at Portland's Daily Grind have voted for IWW representation 15-14, though management is challenging the election which follows close on the heels of an unexpected defeat at Nature's Northwest.

Local Wobs are now working to reunify the shop and prepare a proposed contract. The Daily Grind had been about 80% in support of unionization before the boss' terror campaign.

IWW action in Swansea

The Gap used the Swansea, UK, Job Center January 14th and 15th to recruit staff to open a new store. While a planned action to protest the Gap's role in exploiting sweatshop labor around the world fell through, IWW members distributed IWW information and spoke with applicants.

The fellow workers note the need for a job applicants' union, as job-seekers were interviewed in apparently random order forcing some to endure long waits. The IWW information was warmly received, and additional copies had to be made.

gia, to call for the closing of the SOA. Last November there were over ten thousand people at the gates. It would be great if we could get a large Wobbly contingent down there this November.

Fr. Roy's visit over four days drew large audiences, up to 800 in one case. For this region it was one of the most inspiring presentations. We had the opportunity to meet and work with a lot of different groups. To find out more information about the SOAWatch visit <www.soaw.org>.

SLC Wobs have also endorsed the 'March for our Lives' rally. This is a rally to call for an end to corporate welfare and handouts and to help the people who need it, the poor and homeless. It takes place on the opening day of the Olympics.

We are also looking into bringing the Immokalee Workers to Salt Lake City this March. They'll be on their "Taco Bell Truth Tour," going around the country telling their story about the conditions and wages of their work picking tomatoes in Florida. We're going to try and raise funds for their tour and keep the flame of solidarity alive.

WCC racists get the boot in York

Hundreds of people – including IWW and Anti-Racist Action members from the region – marched on the York, Pennsylvania, public library Jan. 12 to confront a meeting sponsored by the Illinois-based white supremacist group, the World Church of the Creator. Police barred York residents from the entire library, admitting only those attending the racist meeting inside.

City officials sponsored a "Unity Rally" across town, trying to defuse the protest. While the city claims it had no choice but to let the racists take over the public library, it refused to allow a gay rights group to show a video in the library last year on the grounds that it was "offensive." However, York residents found the racists offensive, and joined forces to drive them out of town.

York's new mayor preached racial tolerance to the media, carefully avoiding mention of his predecessor, a former cop who directed racist death squads in 1969. While authorities recently dropped criminal charges against the former mayor, they are continuing to press charges against two black residents charged with shooting a police officer during the 1969 riots. (Former Mayor Charles Robertson denied the charges that he participated in the murder of a black woman during the riots, but admitted shouting "white power" and supplying ammunition to rioters.)

Is the Industrial Worker available in your bookstore? Why not take a bundle?

Parts workers fight company, union

Nearly 100 members of the United Auto Workers picketed the union's "Solidarity House" headquarters in Detroit Jan. 14 to protest the UAW's move to cut off benefits to locked-out Accuride workers in Henderson, Kentucky. More than 400 Accuride workers were locked out in March 1998. A similar picket in May 2000 forced the UAW to restore benefits after cutting them off for 14 months.

Accuride manufactures truck wheels, including a 17-inch wheel used at UAW-represented plants in Louisville, Kentucky, and Janesville, Wisconsin. Accuride workers leafleted the plants Jan. 14, appealing for support. With UAW approval, workers in these plants have been installing scab-made parts since the dispute began.

Workers initially struck in February 1998 against a contract "offer" that allowed the company to contract out all janitorial and skilled trades jobs and gutted seniority rights. However, Accuride was able to maintain production with temporary workers, and the strikers quickly decided to return to work while they struggled for a new contract on the job. Accuride refused to take them back unless they agreed to sign a surrender deal in which most workers would surrender their jobs and the company would get virtually everything it had demanded. Desperate to collect dues and save on strike pay, the UAW has been trying to force workers to sign off on the surrender deal ever since.

In November 2001, the UAW International Executive Board presented workers with a contract nearly identical to the one they had voted down five times before, which would gut seniority rights, contract out maintenance work, raise insurance premiums, and gut union representation rights on the job floor. Less than a fourth of the locked-out workers would return to work under the deal. Not surprisingly, they overwhelmingly voted it down.

"There is absolutely no reason ... to abandon this local," says former UAW Local 2036 President Billy Robinson, who was barred from seeking re-election after he took retirement. But he has continued his protests of what he says has "become a company union." "Even though I may never go back to Accuride, I still have the union in my heart and believe we ought to protect the working people of this country."

In Louisville, rank-and-file workers set up an informational picket line at the plant gates at shift change, handing out fliers to workers entering and leaving the plant. Many expressed surprise that the dispute had dragged on so long, and there were a lot of "Hang in there brothers."

A security guard quickly came out and told them to leave, but they kept on. "It's a shame all those years in a steel products factory made us rather hard of hearing," one reported. "I thought I heard something but there were so many people coming out the drive that looked like they needed a flier I didn't pay much attention."

Then two UAW committeemen approached, also demanding that they leave. The committeemen told the Accuride pickets that they knew they were installing scab parts, but blamed Accuride workers for refusing to accept the contract the International had negotiated.

While the Accuride workers have understandably focused on preserving their strike pay and health benefits, this is a strategy for hanging on – not for winning. No matter how many millions the UAW spends on strike benefits, this struggle will not be won until workers exercise their industrial power to force Accuride to settle. And that means bringing a halt to the union scabbing that sees fellow UAW members installing these scab parts every day.

Contributions can be sent to: Henderson Workers Solidarity Fund, c/o Billy Robinson, PO Box 248, Sebree KY 42455.

B.C. gov't slashes public sector jobs

British Columbia's Liberal government has announced plans to slash one-third of its civil service jobs over the next three years, throwing thousands of workers on the streets while slashing staffing in environmental and other vital social service programs.

Eligibility for unemployment benefits will be slashed, benefits for the elderly cut back, and subsidized bus passes for low-income seniors and the disables eliminated.

The government is also attacking teachers, and planning to unilaterally strip from public sector labor contracts language limiting management "flexibility," for example by requiring minimum staffing levels or restricting involuntary transfers of workers. And the government has hinted it may revoke pay increases already agreed to in union contracts, imposing an across-the-board pay freeze on all non-management staff.

The plans add up to an austerity program even more sweeping than the former Social Credit government's 1983 budget that almost touched off a province-wide general strike before union officials capitulated.

The government is also planning to slash the minimum wage for first-time job-seekers, with the new rate far below even the most minimally decent standard of living.

As the new programs will lead to increased social despair and misery, the government is slashing spending on legal aid and drug and alcohol abuse programs. The closure of eight provincial jails will mean that inmates have to double-up.

While the Liberals claim the cuts are needed to meet a "structural" budget deficit inherited from the previous New Democratic Party regime, the government simultaneously announced cuts in corporate and personal income taxes totalling almost \$2 billion per year.

In this, the Liberals are following the lead of the NDP, which alienated supporters by slashing public services, attacking union rights, and echoing the pro-business and anti-crime rhetoric of the right.

Purdy's Chocolates workers recertified

BY GORDON FLETT

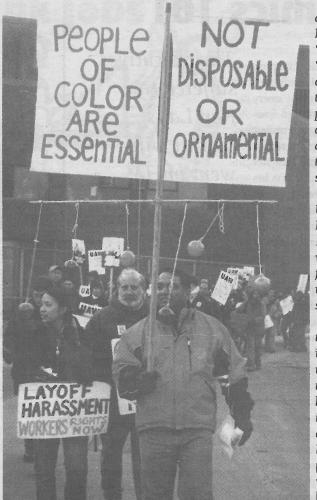
The workers at the Purdy's Chocolates production plant in Vancouver, B.C., voted to recertify with the Communications, Energy & Paperworkers Union Of Canada Local 2000 on Feb. 5.

Over 100 members of CEP Local 2000 struck the company on April 30, 2001, while attempting to negotiate a second collective agreement. On Oct. 15, the B.C. Labour Relations Board ordered the union decertified and the strike ended due to alleged irregularities in the card-signing during the original organizing drive four years before. The union immediately reapplied for certification, and a vote was conducted on Oct. 24. After months of hearings at the LRB, a second vote was ordered to be conducted on Jan. 31. For this vote 20 casual workers who weren't allowed to vote the first time were included on the voters' list.

In spite of this and despite the time given to the company to intimidate their employees, while workers were prohibited from voicing support for the union at their place of employment, the union still won the vote 61 to 57. These workers have now regained their voice in their workplace, and wish to thank the many people who have shown unrelenting support for them throughout this difficult ordeal.

Dunkin' Donuts boycott over

After losing their strike and returning to work without a contract, New Jersey-based UFCW Local1360 has called off its boycott of Dunkin' Donuts. While area police had pledged to honor the boycott, this was not enough to break the donut giant.



Sixty-five INFACT workers and supporters picketed the Boston headquarters of the "social justice" group Feb. 6. "If you want to fight corporations, don't act like them," one sign read. Others pointed to institutional racism at the group, high turnover among frustrated staffers, and to its deeply undemocratic structure.

Since workers turned to the UAW for representation, INFACT has laid off six of its 13 national office staff; all six were union supporters, the four workers who opposed unionization are among the seven still on the payroll.

Three workers were laid-off the day after workers informed management of the union campaign; the other three four days after bargaining began – allegedly in response to a financial crisis. "There is a crisis at INFACT," one worker told picketers; "a crisis about workers' rights, ... about being exploited."

PHOTO: JON BEKKEN

Calif. AFSCME struggle proves danger of dues check-off

A struggle underway in AFSCME local 3299 offers a potent illustration of the reasons the IWW refuses dues check-off. AFSCME won representation rights for University of California workers two decades ago, after a long campaign for state labor relations legislation.

Before winning recognition, AFSCME activists built strong locals on each U.C. campus, relying on aggressive grievance handling and public pressure campaigns to maintain substantial membership.

With official recognition, AFSCME quickly abandoned the volunteer union activists who had built the union, in favor of a centralized, staff-driven approach. However, the California legislation providing for union recognition left union membership voluntary, and frustrated workers began withdrawing from the union. Soon AFSCME had fewer members — and far fewer activists — than it had had before gaining official recognition.

Clerical and professional workers revolted in the 1990s, decertifying AFSCME and replacing it with independent unions. Two and a half years ago, AFSCME international officials set up the UC Contract Campaign, promising local officials an infusion of much-needed resources in order to organize a fight for a decent contract for the thousands of University of California grounds, janitorial, patient care and medical support staff represented by local 3299. In exchange, the volunteer union officials who had kept AFSCME going agreed to turn over administration of the local to the Campaign director through the duration.

When Gov. Gray Davis was elected with heavy union support two years ago, he rewarded public employee unions by imposing "Fair Share" regulations requiring all employees covered by union contracts to either join the union or pay agency fees to cover the costs of union representation. As a result, a local whose membership had fallen to less than 10 percent of the workers it "represented" was suddenly able to collect from the paychecks of every worker.

Thousands of new members were brought into the union in this way, and the International turned to some of them to put more tractable officials into place. Waiving rules requiring one year's membership, the Campaign staff selected a "Unity Slate" and ran an "election" that violated the local's constitution. The result was the loss of the last vestiges of local control.

Most workers see the union "as something that just taxes them," according to shop steward Mary Anne Ring, a dissident who helped organize a brief Dec. 3 picket of the AFL-CIO convention to protest the situation. (Workers were quickly driven from the sidewalks by security guards who insisted that they were private property.)

Activists are now circulating proposals to democratize the statewide local, including opening executive board meetings to the membership, giving members the information they need to participate in the union, and returning enough resources and authority to campus-based chapters to enable them to enforce health and safety conditions and to build a real union presence.

"We've lost a lot of really good people," Ring notes, "and it's going to take a long time to rebuild the union."

Bush bans unions at U.S. Justice Dept.

BY BRIAN OLIVER SHEPPARD

President George W. Bush signed an executive order Jan. 7 that bans unions representation at several Justice Department agencies. Citing concerns over national security, unions are now banned from U.S. attorneys' offices, the National Drug Intelligence Center, the Office of Intelligence Policy and Review, the criminal division of the Justice Dept., and the National Central Bureau of Interpol.

White House spokesperson Anne Womack claimed federal labor law establishes a precedent for this. "The legislation recognizes that a unionized work force is not always appropriate for certain agencies or subdivisions of government," she said, "including employees who engage in investigation, intelligence, counterintelligence or national security."

An AFSCME union official responded: "A lot of these Justice Department workers have been members of unions for 20 years and there's never been an allegation of a problem. It's a very cynical use of the Sept. 11 tragedy by an antiunion administration."

ENRONomics 101

continued from page 1

contracts from regulation. President Clinton played golf with Ken Lay and promoted Enron projects worldwide. Almost every senator in the U.S. received campaign contributions from Enron and/or its executives. And this isn't just a U.S.-centered strategy. At the time of writing, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labour Party government is becoming enmeshed in an Enron-related scandal. And in India, the state of Maharashtra sued Enron for bribing state and national officials to approve a controversial power plant. I could go on, but I'm sure you get the idea.

The second strategy was to promote investor confidence through what has been widely called the cult of Enron. I can best express the nature of this cult through a personal experience. Once, out of desire for experimentation, I proclaimed myself an expert on an obscure subject I knew little about. I published a few papers and low and behold, I became North America's leading expert. Time, Forbes, US News and dozens of local and national newspapers interviewed me. Unfortunately, my morals prevented me from picking a more lucrative expertise. I am sitting in a very cold room right now because the Enron-owned electric company raised rates to 100% over other local utilities.

The cult of Enron operated on the same principle. They were big because they were big. Touted as the future business model in 1990s financial books and magazines, Enron literally couldn't even describe what it did! And while Ken Lay prattled on to investors and other sycophants about 'transparency,' Enron was hiding its debts in shell corporations named after characters from the Star Wars movies. This is one way of creating investor confidence. At least enough time to pick their pockets.

Privatization or Pirate-ization?

"If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face – forever." – George Orwell

One former executive has described working at Enron as having to put your foot into the face of the person below you while tugging the leg of the person above you trying to pull them down. Take the case of employees' retirement funds invested in Enron stocks. Management froze the retirement (401k) funds in order to hold market price long enough so they could divest themselves of their stock at a high price. By the time

Enron

BY RICHARD MYERS
Friend, have ya heard the corporate lies —
They vow to double your dough?
They solemnly swear the stock will rise,
You'll watch it climb before your eyes
As your savings grow?

Have you learned too late the corporate rule: The boss already cashed? Have ya felt just like a bloody fool 'Cause ya bought him that new swimming pool And all your dreams are trashed?

Have you watched him haul away the loot And ya know that you've been had? Have they given you the golden boot While the boss straps on his parachute And it leaves you fightin' mad?

If you're sick to death of corporate lies But ya don't know how to approach it, Then, fellow worker, organize. Prepare the boss a big surprise And stop ingesting bullshit.

No more the thief, the parasite! No more of this abuse. When workers everywhere unite The bosses we shall disinvite, We'll keep what we produce! The executives suffered too; Ken Lay's tearful wife went on TV telling the sad story of having to sell their house. Too bad they only have a dozen more...

they had finished their profiteering workers at Enron were destitute. But the executives suffered too; Ken Lay's tearful wife went on TV telling the sad story of having to sell their house. Too bad they only have a dozen more.

Enron's corporate method was simpleloot, loot and loot some more. They also practiced this outside of the office. Here are some examples, but given a couple minutes time I'm sure anybody could find a dozen more on any web search engine.

Argentina

In the late 1980s Enron bid on a natural gas pipeline between Argentina and Chile. The bid was high and refused by the Minister of Public Works. After the refusal the Minister, Rodolfo Terragno, received several calls from George W. Bush asking him to give the contract to Enron. Terragno reported these calls to the press because he felt there was illegal pressure being placed upon him by the son of the US President. Shortly after there was a change in governments and the new president, Carlos Menem, personally approved the Enron contract. Menem also played a highly publicized game of tennis with Neil Bush on the day of his election.

India

One Enron scandal that has not been covered in the US press is the story of Enron's Dabhol Power Company (DPC). Enron, partnered with Bechtel Corp. and General Electric, built a controversial liquid natural gas electric generation plant in the state of Maharashtra near Bombay. The 2,015-

megawatt, \$2.8 billion project is the largest single foreign investment in India.

The DPC plant was forced upon the Electric Board of Maharashtra by the Clinton administration as a way of opening up U.S. investments in India. Having refused the offer, the plant was accepted by the State Electric Board only after Clinton Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown flew to India and threatened the national government with trade sanctions. In 1995 the state sued Enron for bribing state, power board and federal officials to OK the project.

The 'deal' was typically lopsided. Enron was to build the plant and the state had to guarantee the power would be bought, even if there were no demand. This guarantee will raise electric costs 15% a year for 15 years. The arrangement allowed Enron to make money off the plant even as it was being built.

What has developed is a national scandal in India and helped bring down the Congress Party after its 50-year rule of the country. Labor unions have led the resistance to the project – mobilizing workers, peasants, fishing villages and activists such as environmentalists.

Scared by the strength of anti-DPC



movement, Enron formed a "security force" of off-duty cops and other thugs. This security force has attacked opponents on numerous occasions. One attack was on a local village where 26 women involved in the movement were arrested and held in a small cell for several days. The women were beaten and tortured according to an Amnesty International report.

One woman told a magistrate: "At around 5 in the morning when I was in the bathroom, several male police with batons in their hands forcibly entered the house and started beating members of (my) family who were asleep. Being terrified, I told them from inside the bathroom that I was taking a bath and that I would come out after wearing my clothes. I asked them to call for women police in the meantime... But without paying any attention to my requests, the policemen forcibly opened the door and dragged me out of the house into the police van parked on the road. (While dragging me) the police kept beating me on my back with batons. The humiliation meted out to the other members of my family was similar... My 1 ½-yearold daughter held on to me but the police kicked her away."

So much for Republican family values.

Kuwait

In Kuwait, Enron bid on rebuilding a power plant, Shuaiba North which had been destroyed in the Gulf War. Even though Enron's bid of 11 cents a kilowatt-hour was 5 cents higher than the bid of a German company and 10 cents higher than the state subsidized rate, Enron was awarded the contract. A New Yorker magazine article investigating the deal reported that former President George H.W. Bush, former Secretary of State James Baker and former Commerce Secretary Thomas Kelly as well as Neil and Marvin Bush all represented Enron to the Kuwaitis. One source to the New Yorker reported that Enron's Kuwaiti partners had all been handpicked by the Kuwaiti Prime Minister.

Philippines

The Philippine National Power Corporation awarded Enron a contract to build a 105-megawatt, diesel-fired power plant which would produce electricity at the cost of eight cents a kilowatt-hour – 20 percent higher than other NPC clients. Allegations of bribes led to the resignation of the entire NPC board.

California Scheming

The crown jewel in the Enron story is the California energy crisis of the summer of 2001. For scandalmongers this is the issue most likely to bring Bush and Cheney down. What is becoming apparent is Enron lobbying helped shape the deregulation of electric rates so there were chronic inefficiencies in the system which were best manipulated by Enron. One legislative aide told the San Francisco Chronicle: "Enron's fingerprints

are all over all of the dysfunctional parts of the market." The *Chronicle* goes on to list three ways the market was manipulated:

"1) Power managers running the auction would stack energy bids from the least expensive to the costliest, then select enough bids to cover the state's energy needs. But the managers were forced to pay everyone the same price - the highest cost selected... 2) Companies were not penalized for failing to deliver the power they offered in the auction. If prices were higher on the spot market, marketers could withdraw energy from the auction and sell it on the spot market. 3) Companies could play on the transmission limits of the state. Companies could purposely over schedule power deliveries and end up getting paid to not deliver." (Mark Martin, SF Chronicle, Feb. 3, 2002)

What to do?

There are many other corporate financial scandals on the horizon. The U.S.-based Global Crossing telecommunications company has just filed for bankruptcy and like Enron its executives appear to have looted the company before it collapsed. The Kmart chain and Lucent Technologies are both mentioned as the next to go.

But financial scandal isn't the only issue, only a surface one. Stripped of the wheeling and dealing, Enron still represents capitalism's future. While we may not have it to kick around anymore, it is the model of the neo-liberal 'free trade' corporation. We can expect to see more schemes to strip mine economies to make the very rich richer. It's what capitalism is all about. Enron's use of robber baron era-like private armies gives us a vision of what free trade stands for: A foot in the face of those below them. A foot in the face forever.

Enron has resorted to Pinkertonism in India only because people have stood up against it somewhat successfully. Primarily Indian unions have orchestrated the ongoing delays in the Dabhol project, not because they want better pay for workers but because they take on social issues which affect the community. And the reason the movement is as successful as it is because the workers have a power in society, the power to stop the economy to get what we want.

In the west, especially in the U.S., the anti-globalization movement has been hobbled by its reliance on protests. One not-so-hostile observer of the WEF protests in New York observed that it seems like the protesters are now only demanding to be heard and seen.

To be successful in the fight against an economic system becoming more and more predatory, working folks are going to have to take the time and care to build radical, democratic labor unions such as the IWW. We will only be heard, and our desire for a better world for all come true, when we are organized for ourselves — not just standing against something else.

McDonald's: Junk food, junk jobs

NICOLE THÉ, PARIS

Workers at the McDonald's restaurant in the Strasbourg-Saint Denis area of Paris struck Oct. 24, demanding reinstatement of five fellow workers fired for union activity. Two were union members, one of whom had already been threatened with firing in September, while the other three were candidates in the upcoming workplace representative elections (standard in France), to be held two weeks later. In an obvious attempt to justify this measure, management is accusing all five of embezzling one million French francs over several months, the equivalent of about 200,000 hamburgers.

After the Workplace Inspection Department (a government body) made an unsuccessful attempt at mediating, the situation was clearly deadlocked. The workers' demands met with wholesale rejection from both the franchise owner and the overarching McDonald's organization in France. Hostil-

ity has reached the point that the strikers are now demanding not only that the five victimized workers be reinstated, but also that the restaurant manager be ousted.

The managerial approach used in this case is nothing new. In keeping with parent company practices in the United States, McDonald's in France will do whatever it takes to prevent its employees from organizing a union. The franchise system enables McDonald's to sidestep the legal obligation of all French employers to negotiate with unions and also to pass on to franchisees the direct costs involved in managing "human resources." McDonald's offers crew members the minimum wage, and not much more to higher-ranking personnel; overtime is rarely paid for; and there is no such thing as a seniority bonus. As for working conditions, part-time status is the rule; speed-up and pressure are so intense that they result in high turnover; and health and safety requirements are routinely ignored.

Fed up with this situation, McDonald's workers started organizing to improve their lot. This set off a full-scale anti-union attack including warnings, harassment and now firings. A similar situation prevails in the other fast-food chains here. A CGT union activist

at Pizza Hut was subjected first to temporary dismissal, then to out-and-out firing, while a union representative at Quick who dared to speak up on a radio show was dismissed. And of course, when it comes to repression, EuroDisneyland is second to none.

In December 2000, a first strike broke out at the McDonald's restaurant on Boulevard Saint-Germain in Paris, with workers demanding higher wages and a Christmas bonus. Two weeks on strike brought them a few gains, and above all set a precedent.

In February 2001, workers at the Pizza Hut near the Opera went out for 32 days to demand higher pay, a Christmas bonus, extra pay for night work and greater job safety. Once again, the struggle paid off in the form of modest raises and a number of bonuses.

At the end of the Pizza Hut strike, the CGT formed a fast-food division, which has enrolled workers at large book and clothing chain stores as well. In addition, a network

called Stop Précarité (Stop Contingent Work) has formed, bringing together militant unions, unemployed workers organizations and contingent workers to fight

the current surge in contingent labor.

We have to unmask this

gigantic machine for

reaping high profits by

exploiting young people.

For weeks now, the Strasbourg-Saint-Denis strikers have been posted in front of the restaurant (closed and protected by security guards), getting petitions signed, collecting donations and handing out leaflets. Although tired and cold, they have shown their determination to win out over a company obviously pursuing a strategy of letting the strike drag on until it peters out.

Little by little, outside activists have started helping out, raising funds, providing logistical support, and spreading information about the struggle. Their efforts include picketing and (symbolically) blocking other McDonald's restaurants, especially one at metro station Parmentier, which belongs to the same franchisee.

A support collective was founded Nov. 14 in order to give greater visibility to strike support work and provide a focal point to all those interested in mobilizing around this exemplary struggle against ruthless exploitation, intimidation and repression.

On Nov. 17, a second McDonald's went

out on strike (while a third one was blocked for over an hour). At the Chételet restaurant, 18 employees refused to work from noon until 9.30 p.m. in solidarity with strikers from Strasbourg-Saint-Denis. The workers aimed not only to show their solidarity, but also to put forward their own demands, which are basically the same as throughout the fast-food sector: the right to organize, better working conditions, bonuses (e.g. for dirty work, deliveries, Christmas), more respect, an end to harassment, paid break time and overtime, upgrading of base wages (most McDonald's workers earn 43 francs an hour,

McDonald's restaurants were on strike at the same time in France. The Strasbourg-Saint-Denis strikers and their fellow workers at Chételet are now engaged in common struggle against this contemporary form of

On Nov. 24, three McDonald's were blocked for an hour each in order to get the message across to management, while raising awareness among employees and patrons.

Dec. 1, including the one near the Opera,

The issue of working conditions in fastfood chains, notably at McDonald's, has received increasing publicity lately. Yet many customers remain unaware of the problem (or pretend to be), while many workers, especially young people in their first job, are barely informed about their rights and find themselves compelled to accept whatever conditions management lays down.

The fight has to continue - in the streets,

about \$5.90 or £4). Thus, on Nov. 17, for the first time, two slavery as practiced by McDonald's

Two other McDonald's were blocked for over three peak business hours.

in front of the restaurants, and inside them. We have to inform people, establish contact and create a situation in which we can effectively counter management propaganda and unmask this gigantic machine for reaping high profits by exploiting young people.

Discontent has become palpable in most McDonald's restaurants in France, and awareness among the workers is rising to such an extent that national management has launched a counter-attack. On-site mangers are now called upon to keep a close watch over their crews, paying attention to minor complaints while dissuading them from putting forward demands. The message is: strikers are crooks, and those who support them aren't much better; collective action only serves the selfish interests of a handful of leaders; strikes may make sense elsewhere, but not in our company; what matters most is meeting sales targets, successfully rolling out new products, and the like.

But things may well be changing. Events are organized, the media have picked up on the story, people are mobilizing in support, leaflets are circulating in the restaurants, McDonald's workers from different places are starting to link up, and collectives are taking shape outside of Paris, distributing leaflets in front of the restaurants.

Contact has also been established with women on strike in a clothing retail firm some 500 miles away, in the south of France. The strikers are faced with similar wages (3,000 francs for a part-time job), similarly repressive conditions (firing of a union delegate) and an equally inflexible employer, who refuses to yield even after two months on strike. These women invited the McDonald's strikers to a support party, and on the following day they all went together to leaflet in front of the two McDonald's in their town.

On the judicial front, McDonald's has nothing to crow about. On Oct. 30, the Workplace Inspection Department quashed the firing of the Strasbourg-Saint-Denis restaurant's sole union representative. On Dec. 3, at the emergency court hearing requested by the other fired workers, it became clear that McDonald's simply had no case.

A major support event took place Dec. 10. It was better attended than expected. In addition to raising funds, it also gave young strikers the opportunity to speak out and to meet workers in struggle from other industries (e.g. victims of downsizing, contingent workers in cultural activities, and members of unemployed organizations). T-shirts were sold, funds were collected, and workers engaged in struggle elsewhere (e.g. Eurodisney and Dannon) addressed the audience.

Respect for union rights, proper pay for overtime, fair wages, better working conditions and decent, humane treatment are the key issues at stake in this struggle, which ultimately concerns all workers in the entire McDonald's France chain and in the rest of the fast-food business.

Since management at the Strasbourg-Saint-Denis restaurant has chosen to let the struggle drag on and on, the only way we can win is to extend the struggle and to give it a more active character.

We need to convince customers to stop eating at McDonald's as long as the current climate of manipulation, intimidation and repression prevails, as long as the elementary rights of workers are blatantly disregarded.

We have to inform other McDonald's employees of their rights, starting with the right to say no to orders from management (this is a workplace, not the army), the right to organize, to hold discussions, to present demands and to go on strike. We have to stress that individually workers have no power, whereas joined together in solidarity they can defend themselves and win.

Every Saturday, McDonald's restaurants are jam-packed. That's why we're going to keep on addressing them so we can explain what's happening, and why they have every reason to boycott the world's number 1 supplier of junk-food and junk-jobs.

After two months on strike, we're as determined as ever. For info on the struggle, email: soutien_macdo@yahoo.fr

What does Enron tell us about the capitalist system?

BY BRIAN OLIVER SHEPPARD

One of the founders of American sociology, William Graham Sumner, observed in the 19th century that: "One of the worst features of the existing system is that the employees have a constant risk in their employer. If he is not competent to manage the business with success, they suffer with him."

Coming from Sumner, who believed in harsh, Social Darwinist capitalism, the criticism is noteworthy. For one, it counters the oft-heard rationale that the capitalist takes all the risk (and thereby deserves the profit) in any business venture. That workers have no risk in the success or failure of their employer is a myth useful for free market cheerleaders, but as the recent Enron scandal illustrates, it's usually employees who, in fact, get the shaft.

Some 20,000 workers look to be jobless - "Lay'd off" - due to Enron management's behavior. Many of these workers had lifetime savings and investments frozen even as higher-ups cashed out their own holdings before the company collapsed.

Enron engaged in a profitable corporate subterfuge; as a result, a handful of executives made out with millions while many of their underlings wonder where their next meal will be coming from. Workers who only a few months ago could brag that they were working for one of the world's most powerful corporations now wonder how soon they can get another job in a bleak labor market.

Enron defrauded investors and the pub-

lic by creating an elaborate system of front companies. As if to satirize their own phoniness, Enron named some of the fake firms after Star Wars characters. Enron shifted its debts to these pseudo-companies so that it could continue to look as if it were doing well when in fact it was riding on vapor. When the company began to fail last Fall, CEO Kenneth Lay began making emergency phone calls to the Commerce Department and to the US Treasury, among others.

The company was not rescued, but Lay continues to enjoy the life of a multi-millionaire. Alas, reporters found that - Ms. Lay's histrionics to the contrary - the Lay family in fact owned tens of millions of dollars in property holdings and several hundred thousand dollars in stocks of other companies, ensuring that the Lay family would be quite well off for some time to come.

"Companies come and go. It's part of the genius of capitalism," U.S. Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill commented after the collapse. "People get to make good decisions or bad decisions, and they get to pay the consequences or to enjoy the fruits of their decisions. That's the way the system works."

The decision of Enron executives to cash out was indeed a good decision from their standpoint, and they are reaping the rewards. Meanwhile, workers have lost their pensions, and their jobs. However, workers did not get to make any of the important decisions about how Enron would be run - not even whether to cash out the stock in their retirement

plans. They are paying the price for decisions they did not make. That, in fact, is the genius of capitalism: capitalists generally suffer the least from the risks they take, while those who work for capitalists pay the price.

Sumner said that if the capitalist "is not competent to manage the business with success, they [the employees] suffer with him." However, even that is not usually true, it is unclear how employees "suffered with" such multimillionaires as Kenneth Lay. Rather, the workers suffered greatly while upper management went relatively unscathed. There was no "suffering with"; there was just suffering on the part of workers and profit on the part of the wealthy.

Enron is not necessarily a unique situation; what makes it unique was how far it fell when it did fall (from one of the top ten corporations in the world to bankruptcy in a matter of weeks), how many workers and investors were defrauded, how much money Enron has given to politicians and journalists over the past year, and what connections it has to the highest levels of policy-making

Workers are often "rewarded" for their loyalty and productivity this way. The record profits of the '90s have resulted not in abundance for all, but in a recession in which over a million have been laid off so far. These social problems and others have their roots in the system of class property and the exploitation of labor, revealing how deeply problematic authoritarianism is in our age.

Dita Sari spurns Reebok award

Prominent women's labor rights activist Dita Indah Sari has rejected a \$50,000 human rights award from Reebok in protest against the meager salaries the company pays its Indonesian factory workers.

"The factories do not pay a living wage. The pay packet cannot cover basic needs," she told the Associated Press Feb. 5.

She said it would have been hypocritical to accept the money.

Dita was jailed by the regime of ex-president Suharto for her labor activism, and her role in founding the National Front for Indonesian Workers' Struggle (FNPBI).

Workers at Reebok factories in western Java receive minimum wage, which is less than \$2 a day.

Footwear factory owners argue that recent increases in minimum wage levels have put the industry on the brink of collapse. If salaries are increased further, they say, companies would leave Indonesia and move to countries with lower labor costs, such as China and Vietnam.

Reebok said it was sorry that Dita would not accepting the award, saying it strongly supported her cause. However, Reebok did not offer to increase its workers' pay.

Reebok has been handing out human rights awards since 1988 in an effort to divert attention away from its role in profiting from workers in Asian sweatshops.

Dita Sari's statement

The driving forces of globalisation are the movement and expansion of capital and technology through multinational companies. Globalisation, some people argue, has contributed a lot to the creation of a new world, with a global welfare and justice for all.

But in practice, globalisation is producing neither universal welfare nor global peace. On the contrary, in reality, globalisation has divided the world into two

sides, which are antagonistic towards each other. There are wealthy creditors and bankrupt debtors, there are super-rich countries and underdeveloped countries, super-wealthy speculators and impoverished malnourished children. Globalisation intensifies, not a higher-paid and a better life for workers in the third world, but the growing gap between the rich and the poor.

And this also happens in Indonesia, among Indonesian workers who work in multinational shoes companies, including Reebok.

In November last year, I was informed that I was selected as one of the awardees of the annual Reebok Human Rights Award program and ceremony...

Globalisation has divided the world into two sides ... superwealthy speculators and impoverished, malnourished children. Globalisation intensifies the growing gap between the rich and the poor.

I have taken this award into a very deep consideration. We finally decide not to accept this. On the one hand, this is a kind of recognition of the struggle and the hard work that we have done for years. But on the other hand, we are very conscious of the condition of the

Reebok workers from third world countries, such as in Indonesia, Mexico, China, Thailand, Brazil and Vietnam. As a trade union, we strongly put a lot of pressure to achieve what every worker deserves: higher wages, better working conditions and a brighter future for their children.

In Indonesia, there are five Reebok companies. 80% of the workers are women. All companies are sub-contracted, often by the South Korean companies such as Dung Jo and Tong Yang. Since the workers can only get around \$1.5 a day, they then have to live in a slum area, surrounded by poor and unhealthy conditions, especially for their chil-

dren. At the same time, Reebok collected millions of dollars of profit every year, directly contributed by these workers.

The low pay and exploitation of the workers of Indonesia, Mexico and Vietnam are the main reasons why we will not accept this award. Some of our members in the union work in companies producing Reebok shoes

The decision I have made is not merely based on data, report, statistics or assumptions. In 1995, I was arrested and tortured by the police, after leading a strike of 5000 workers of Indoshoes Inti Industry. They demanded an increase of their wages (they were paid only US\$1 for working 8 hours a day), and maternity leave as well. This company operated in West Java, and produced shoes of Reebok and Adidas. I have seen for myself how the company treat the workers, and used the police to repress the strikers.

We believe that accepting the award is not a proper or a right thing to do. This is part of the consequences of our work to help workers improve their life. We cannot tolerate the way multinational companies treat the workers of the third world countries. And we surely hope that our stand can make a contribution to help changing the labor conditions in Reebok-produced companies.

Dita Sari , National Front for Indonesian Workers Struggle Jakarta, January 29

Payroll deductions

BY ALEXIS BUSS

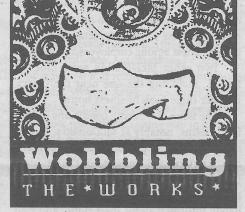
Given that most wage slaves don't see the money we've earned until two weeks after we've toiled for it, bosses will sometimes decide that our paycheck can operate as a sort of slush fund to cover expenses of doing business, like providing uniforms, covering cash register shortages, or recouping losses for credit extended to customers. Whether or not the boss can do this is a matter of state law. Below is a sampling of state guidelines for handling payroll deductions, found on the Internet most often by checking out the state's Bureau of Labor. If your state isn't listed below, try looking it up on the Internet, or give the Wobblies' Headquarters a call at 215-763-1274. All states will provide for deductions that are legally required (e.g., payroll taxes, child support orders, wage garnishments).

Louisiana: Bosses may make deductions not authorized by the employee, an employer is prohibited from penalizing an employee or deducting any sum of money as a penalty or fine from the employee's wages, except where the employee damages property belonging to the employer or property in the possession of the employer. The deduction, though, cannot exceed the actual damage dame

Kentucky: No boss may impose fines, or deduct for cash shortages in a common money till, cash box or register used by two or more persons; deduct for breakage or losses due to acceptance by an employee of checks which are subsequently dishonored; or losses due to defective workmanship, lost or stolen property, damage to property, default of customer credit, or nonpayment for goods or services received by the customer if such losses are not attributable to employee's willful or intentional disregard of employer's interest.

New York: If an employee takes or damages property belonging to the employer, the employer may not recoup the value of that property by withholding all or a portion of that employee's wages. The employer, like any other party aggrieved by the negligent or criminal behavior of another, must pursue whatever remedies are available at law. The boss may not confiscate wages without a court order. An employer may not compel an employee to pay the cost of acquiring or maintaining uniforms required on the job.

Minnesota: No employer shall make any



deduction from the wages due or earned by any employee, who is not an independent contractor, for lost or stolen property, damage to property, or to recover any other claimed indebtedness running from employee to employer, unless the employee, after the loss has occurred or the claimed indebtedness has arisen, voluntarily authorizes the employer in writing to make the deduction or unless the employee is held liable in court. Authorizations of deductions for the above are not be admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding.

Oregon: Employers may not make deductions for uniforms or tools or their maintenance from workers earning the minimum wage (which is currently higher than the federal minimum wage). Bosses may deduct the "fair market value" of meals or lodging, but if the meals are not wanted, no deduction may be made. An itemized statement of deductions needs to be furnished to the workers on regular paydays at the time payment is made.

The Federal law also deals with deductions that would bring a worker's earnings below the minimum wage in the Fair Labor Standards Act. The FLSA does not allow uniforms, or other items which are considered to be primarily for the benefit or convenience of the employer, to be included as wages. Thus, an employer may not take credit for such items in meeting his/her obligations toward paying the minimum wage or overtime. This doesn't mean that the boss can't charge you for your uniform; what it does mean is that the boss might pay you minimum wage for a while until the uniform is paid off. If the employee is already making minimum wage, then the cost of the uniform cannot be deducted at all. If the worker is making more than the minimum wage, the cost of the uniform could be spread across many pay periods so that the worker doesn't get less than minimum wage.

IWW to represent Portland ACORN staff

Although Portland, Oregon, ACORN staff won their NLRB union representation election several weeks ago, ACORN has thus far failed to open negotiations with the IWW or to return staff (laid-off as the union was filing for recognition, ostensibly on economic grounds) to their jobs.

In Florida, ACORN's effort to block staff at its St. Petersburg office from organizing with the IWW was rejected by the NLRB, which has ordered a union representation election there.

Workers in Dallas, Texas, fired for discussing unionization are awaiting a NLRB ruling on their Unfair Labor Practice charges. However, ACORN-controlled SEIU Local 100 had begun bargaining with the independent union which won the right to represent its staff last fall.

Pictsweet loses ULP

In another blow to Pictsweet Mushroom Farms, a California administrative law judge has ruled that union supporter Fidel Andrade was unjustly fired in May for his union activities. Andrade must be reinstated at the Ventura farm and be given back pay.

This is the third time the state Agricultural Labor Relations Board has sided with the union. The UFW and Pictsweet have been involved in a bitter dispute since 1999.

Andrade was fired after an argument with his supervisor. He had stepped in to defend a fellow union supporter. Pictsweet did not fire a worker involved in a past dispute who threatened to kill a union supporter.

Kinko's violates rights

U.S.-owned copy chain Kinko's is under fire for restrictive work rules including obstructing the rights of workers to organize and even dictating the type of music they play at work.

Australia's AMWU Printing Division has turned the spotlight on Kinko's after it tried to stop workers from attending union meetings at the workplace and threatened those who did attend with disciplinary action.

As part of the crackdown, Kinko distributed a policy on 'The Solicitation and Distribution of Non-Company materials' which forbids workers from speaking to their union delegate during work time, reading or distributing union material at work, speaking to fellow workers about the union or anything else not authorized by the company,

attending union meetings at the workplace, putting up union notices that aren't approved by the company, or having any printed matter not authorized by the company on the work premises.

The policy also restricts the radio stations that can be played on site, allowing only "customer-appropriate stations" – defined as CNN, easy listening and all-news stations.

Canadian farm workers win right to organize

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that agricultural workers can not be denied the right to unionize, rejecting new labor legislation forced through in 1995 by Ontario Premier Mike Harris.

The case was brought by chicken farm workers trying to organize into the UFCW. The ruling would also seem to apply to domestic workers, professionals and other workers excluded from provincial labor law.

At an absolute minimum, the court said, agricultural workers must be permitted to assemble, organize and take political positions "free from interference, coercion and discrimination in the exercise of these freedoms." Writing for an 8-1 majority, Justice Michel Bastarache said that by excluding agricultural workers from the Labour Relations Act, Ontario sent an implicit message to employers that they could fight off any attempts by those workers to organize.

"I believe it is reasonable to conclude that the exclusion of agricultural workers from the Labour Relations Act interferes with their fundamental freedom to organize," Judge Bastarache said. He said the exclusion of a group from labour-relations protections "delegitimizes associational activity, and thereby ensures its ultimate failure."

UAW embraces cooperation in wake of Ford lay-offs

Shortly after Ford announced plans to lay off thousands of workers and close plants in Canada and the United States, the UAW issued a press statement reaffirming its commitment to "sing constructive relationships with employers to get through tough times."

Meanwhile, the Canadian Auto Workers union issued a bitter "Buy Canadian" appeal. Neither union proposed measures to organize non-union suppliers, reduce the work week, build solidarity with other auto workers around the world, or force automakers to sacrifice some of their precious profits, rather than forcing auto workers to bear the costs of management's bad decisions.



Two world visions

continued from page 1

an army of desperate job seekers, willing to take any job regardless of the level of exploitation involved. Government propaganda is selling export processing zones as a source of jobs, ignoring the high financial and human costs of multinational investment in the zones."

Union federations including ICFTU, the International Trade Secretariats and the World Confederation of Labour presented a joint statement to the forums in Porto Alegre and New York City noting that: "Working people in most of the world are getting a bad deal in these first years of the 21st century, as employment security declines and the share of wages falls relative to profits. Inequalities are widening... The international economic institutions, are increasingly dominating the developing countries. Poverty is worsening while wealth is accumulating and concentrating as never before."

"Democratic governance barely exists," the statement continued. International agreements "protect ... property rights in the interest of capital rather than the rights of labour." Privatization removes vital public services from social control, and prices them out of the reach of millions of workers.

"Markets do not clean up after themselves" the unions noted. "How many more Argentinas have to crash and burn before world leaders and institutions stop imposing their model and, instead, take a good hard look at it?"

But rather than call for the abolition of this market-driven system, the unions offered to "help fill the moral vacuum created by market forces. [Unions] are instruments of the will of workers and become their lever to move the world – to change the distribution of wealth and power inside countries and beyond."

"Our goal is to win support for a world that is free from poverty and unemployment, from discrimination and injustice, from terrorism in all its forms, and from the threat of war and oppression. We want a world with full democracy and respect for human rights. We want a world where corporations, large and small, respect the rights of their workers and unions, and the societies in which they operate. We want an end to extremes of

Sweatshop-clad cops

Garment workers protesting sweatshop labor during the World Economic Forum were corralled behind barricades by police wearing uniforms made by sweatshop labor.

NYPD gear is manufactured by subcontractors scattered across the globe. Since companies are not being required to divulge their factory locations, it is impossible to say for sure where the uniforms are coming from. But the police contract with companies such as VF Corp., which produces in countries such as China, Pakistan and Thailand.

City law requires that contractors meet basic labor standards and reveal their list of subcontractors. But the law is not enforced. opulence and misery; we want full equality between women and men; we want respect for the rights of all, young and old; and we want an acceptance that economies and societies can only be sustainable when they are based on a high level of public services and on the regulation of private power by accountable and democratic governments and organisations. We are convinced that another world is possible..."

However, the employing class has demonstrated that it is quite unwilling to respect workers rights, to subject itself to democratic rule, or to bridge the gaping chasm between the wealthy and those this capitalist system has condemned to utter destitution. Their global system has no conscience to which we can appeal, and recognizes no limits to its barbaric plunder. Another world is indeed possible, but it will come about only when workers organize, wrest this world we have built from our exploiters, and proceed to build that new society with our own hands.

Top 1% earn same as poorest 57%

The world's richest 50 million people earn as much as the poorest 2.7 billion, according to new research from a World Bank economist who warns that the rich may soon be forced to move to fortified communities for protection from the victims of their exploitation.

Senior Bank economist Branko Milanovic notes that four-fifths of the world's population live below what countries in North America and Europe consider the poverty line.

"We can wonder how long such huge inequalities may persist in the face of ever closer contacts, not least through television and movies, where opulent lifestyles of the rich influence expectations and often breed resentment among the poor," Milanovic says.

"Should it be of concern to the rich? Perhaps, if we believe that wide income gaps lead to immigration and resentment breeds terrorism. For ultimately, the rich may have to live in gated communities while the poor roam the world outside those few enclaves."

Sweatshop Olympics

As the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City opened, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has called upon the International Olympics Committee to investigate official Olympic Games clothing supplier, 'Marker,' for producing the official uniforms of the 2002 Winter Olympics Torchbearers in Burma.

In addition to Marker Ltd., three other companies benefitting from Burma's military regime, Lucent Technologies, Chevron Texaco and Samsung, are official sponsors/partners of the 2002 Olympic Games. The brutal military dictatorship, which has controlled Burma since 1962, is directly responsible for the use of forced labor and a range of other human rights abuses.

In Memoriam ALEXANDER BRUCE MACKAY

October 4, 1945 - December 28, 2001

BY PATRICK McGUIRE X348100 WITH ASSISTANCE FROM SUSAN McDONALD & JOHN FRIESEN

The IWW lost an important Fellow Worker as last year drew to a close when Bruce Mackay died suddenly of a heart attack. Fittingly, Bruce passed away at the Union Centre where he spent countless hours helping other workers organize and settle grievances.

It is with honour that I write this fond remembrance of a gentle, kind man who left the Winnipeg labour movement and every one in his life richer for having known him. Bruce signed me up into the IWW in 1998 when he helped us organize our health food store. Unlike many other "respectable" members of the labour movement, Bruce took interest in a rag-tag bunch of youths interested in workplace democracy. I clearly remember him reading us the Preamble to the Constitution as his voice shook slightly from nervousness.

Bruce was never a gloryhound or spotlight-seeker, but instead went about his work quietly and behind the scenes.

Although FW Mackay was continuously around in the labour and social justice movements, I never learned much about his personal life. I knew that he and his partner and wife Susan McDonald were always Wobs in good standing and that they shared a passion for cooking and the Winnipeg Folkfest. Recently I learned that Bruce grew up in a military family and that he travelled all over Canada and some of Germany before settling down in Winnipeg. This may explain why Bruce spent so much of his time working in the peace movement and assisting Amnesty International.

Bruce's activity in the labour movement was continuous and varied. Bruce worked for the federal government for 20 years before becoming active in the Canada Employment Immigration Union and serving on the District Labour Council for Kenora, Ontario. When he moved to Winnipeg and took a position with the CEIU as a union representative Bruce felt honoured to be employed by the union and deeply believed that he worked for the members. FW Mackay was also a member of the Winnipeg Labour Council and most recently was serving as its recording secretary.

Bruce loved his work and was enthusiastic about attending picket lines, offering training and leading Fellow Workers in song.

Wobblies who attended the 1999 General Assembly of the IWW in Winnipeg will remember Bruce as the chairperson of the meeting, though he served as secretary-treasurer for the Winnipeg GMB for many years prior to that.

Bruce was also a strong supporter of working-class culture. He helped organize an annual MayWorks festival to celebrate the contributions of labour and art while honouring Mayday and the historic General Strike of 1919. Bruce also played an important role in the Winnipeg Labour Choir, where he revelled in collecting song sheets of union music. Bruce's favorites were always old Wobbly tunes and he strongly believed in keeping our histories of struggle alive by retelling them in song.

Bruce invited me to join the Labour Choir at least once a year. This past summer he made a persuasive case that the choir was short on men's voices, so I joined. It was great to have Bruce at my shoulder patiently explaining songs to me. His presence in the choir will be sorely missed. We did Bruce proud at his memorial service, though. When the Labour Choir sang "Joe Hill" there wasn't a dry eye in the crowd and when we moved on to "Solidarity Forever" the whole room rose to its feet with fists in the air. I have never been so proud to sing in my life.

To friends and Fellow Workers, Bruce encapsulated the spirit of the union movement. He was a traditionalist, feminist and above all a humanist. He believed in the sanctity of life and in empowering people.

Bruce will be dearly missed, but he will remain forever in the hearts of his family, friends and Fellow Workers.

As Bruce would say, "In action there is strength." We commit ourselves to continuing that action just as Bruce would see fit.

Farewell, Fellow Worker DAVE BAXTER

On Jan. 4 Portland IWW members joined a memorial service for Public Service IU 650 activist Dave Baxter. Dave worked as a counsellor of homeless youth at Street Light Shelter, where he was also a founding union representative, and spent many volunteer hours helping to establish the collectively run Red and Black Cafe.

The family asked, in lieu of flowers, for the many people who loved Dave to contribute to the IWW organizing fund, the union Dave so struggled to build.

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Alberta Spanish Civil War memorial

BY EUGENE PLAWIUK

The Edmonton IWW General Membership Branch has launched a broad-based committee to create a memorial for the Alberta veterans of the Spanish Civil War. This committee is made up of unionists, socialists, human rights and other activists, and is open to anyone interested in working on developing a memorial for the forgotten veterans of the Spanish Civil War.

From 1936 to 1939, workers and peasants fought for a socialist Spain against the forces of Fascism and hostile governments. Thousands of workers mobilized around the world to volunteer to fight fascism and repression in Spain. It was the largest volunteer mobilization in the 20th century.

In Canada over 1500 ordinary citizens volunteered to fight in Spain despite the fact that the Liberal Government of Mackenzie King had made it a criminal code offense to 'volunteer for a foreign war.' That law is still on the books today. Efforts to remove this law and give these veterans full recognition of their efforts against Fascism was defeated by the Liberal government and their allies in the Reform Party. It is notable that one of the most outspoken defenders of Fascist Spain, who took great pleasure in red-baiting the veterans, was Calgary MP Jason Kenney. Kenney called the volunteers communist dupes. In reality the volunteers were unemployed Canadians from all walks of life, chartered accountants, farmers, railworkers, nurses, even city councillors.

The Edmonton Public School Board joined other municipal governments and school boards across Canada endorsing the volunteer efforts. Edmonton city councillor Margaret Crang took a leave of absence during her term to go to Spain. The Edmonton

City Council and the school board at this time were dominated by labour representatives from the Edmonton District Labour Council. Unions and union activists from across Canada supported efforts to raise medical supplies and funds for Spain. Many Albertans volunteered, and those volunteers, who were the first fighters against fascism, have been forgotten. But no longer.

The Committee is looking to build a broad popular public push to memorialize all those veterans from across the province who fought in Spain. If you would like to help out with this important memorial please contact us by email abmacpaps@yahoo.ca

Canada recognizes antifascist fighters after 65 years

BY PETER MOORE, OTTAWA

Almost 65 years after the International Brigades evacuated Spain, the governor general of Canada finally recognized the sacrifices of the 1,546 Canadians who fought to defend Spanish democracy. About 300 people attended the Oct. 20 ceremony in Ottawa's Green Island Park to pay their respects. The monument takes the shape of a man defiantly waving his fist atop a concrete crescent, sided with plaques bearing the names of the volunteers. Crosses mark 254 names.

About 40,000 volunteers, many political refugees from Fascism, fought or served as medical personnel during the first two years of the Spanish Civil War. Canada's per capita volunteer contribution was only matched by Spain's neighbour, France.

Upon their return, many veterans found themselves under surveillance by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, branded as communists and subversives, and blacklisted by

WANTED WHITE HOUSE

REPEAL OF THE RESPONSIBLE CONTRACTOR RULE AND

CHRONIC LAWBREAKERS







FOR GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Bush's war on labor continues

BY BRIAN OLIVER SHEPPARD

On January 11, Bush appointed antilabor zealot Eugene Scalia to the top lawyer position at the U.S. Dept. of Labor. The appointment of Scalia, who called ergonomics "junk science par excellence," has raised the ire of labor activists, who see the appointment as the latest in Bush's continuing war against working people. The appointment

bosses. Fund-raising for the \$80,000 monument was completely done by working people. The government only provided the land.

In a strange epilogue to the ceremony, staff at the nearby Canada and the World pavilion prevented IWW members Peter Moore and Mathieu Brülé from attending the reception. The reception for this working-class monument was "invitation only."

was made while Congress was in recess, allowing the appointment to sidestep Congressional approval.

Scalia, who is now "Solicitor of Labor," is responsible for enforcing federal labor laws such as those that concern the minimum wage, child labor, equal opportunity, unemployment benefits, and others. Scalia joins a Dept. of Labor staff headed by Heritage Foundation fellow and ex-banking executive Elaine Chao.

This blow comes after Bush's Dec. 27, 2001, decision to repeal a federal rule that encouraged government agencies to contract with businesses that had not engaged in notable violations of consumer, environmental, and labor laws. Repeal of the federal rule signals tolerance for corporations that routinely violate the rights of workers and consumers. Since assuming the Presidency, Bush has consistently installed anti-labor politicians into key government posts, including Wisconsin welfare slasher Tommy Thompson to head the Dept. of Health and Human Services.

Review: Near West Side Story

REVIEWED BY CARLOS CORTEZ

Carolyn Eastwood, Near West Side Stories: Struggles for Community in Chicago's Maxwell Street Neighborhood. Lake Claremont Press, \$17.95.

For over a century, Chicago's Maxwell Street was the western rival of New York's Orchard Street; like her sister in Gotham, a free and open market where anything could be bargained for from the proverbial soup to nuts. It was an older part of the city that had been a port of entry for many waves of ethnic groups. While not being the cleanest of streets, few streets could rival it for color and atmosphere. Being a bit rundown, it and the adjoining neighborhood was a locale where poorer people could afford to live.

However, the juggernaut of gentrification, along with the expansion of the University of Illinois in Chicago, has spelt the doom of the Maxwell Street neighborhood despite valiant attempts on the part of various community groups and individuals to forestall it. Many lower-income people have consequently been displaced.

This book features the stories of four such individuals who did their best to keep the neighborhood intact. They were long-standing residents, representing the ethnic cross section of a poor but truly cosmopolitan part of Chicago.

Jewish immigrants were among the first to settle in the area during the 1800s, and by 1910 the district was 90 percent Russian Jewish. At the turn of the past century, due to their love of learning, it was the locale of many cultural and labor organizations. Harold Fox, whose grandfather fled the Russian progroms, established a business on Maxwell Street and eventually succeeding members of the family had small shops and clothing stores. He had operated a tailor shop where suits were made for such bandleaders as Benny Goodman, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie and others. In his free time he also had his own orchestra.

After the turn of the past century, immi-

grants from Italy moved into the area, bringing their cultural contributions while adding to the growing labor movement. Florence Scala, like Fox, was born in the area and spent most of her life there. When Hull House was established on Halsted Street in 1889, Italians were already living there. The Italians had their various social help associations, usually based on the village they emigrated from back home. Florence, whose parents came from the province of Abruzzi, became a dedicated activist for her community – the latest, but not least, campaign the attempt to save the area that has now become a parking lot for the university.

At the time the Maxwell Street market was demolished, the black neighborhood surrounding it had already been dispersed by urban renewal and the construction of the Dan Ryan expressway. Yet, one-third of the vendors and thousands of the customers were black. This community was known as "Black Bottom." Nate Duncan was a part of the black immigration from the South in the interval between the two world wars. He had worked at odd jobs up into his teens, when he found steady employment in a Jewish delicatessen where he had a long friendship with Ben Lyon, the owner who, upon retirement, passed the store on to him. The store was right on Maxwell, and Nate became the owner of a Kosher deli patronized by many show people. Maxwell Street was also where many famous blues musicians got their start. Even in the last days, there would be a blues combo occupying an empty lot or a lone guitar player plying his trade on the sidewalk. Nate also tells about the gypsies and their king who lived in the neighborhood.

Also situated in the area was the original inner city Mexican neighborhood that was dispersed with the construction of the university and the Eisenhower expressway. Mexicans have been trickling into Chicago since the beginning of this past century, mostly to work at low-paying jobs like the railroad, tanneries and other menial employ-

ment. Like other racial minorities, they were subject to harassment, particularly from the police who took advantage of their unfamiliarity with English. When the archdiocese decided to demolish their long-standing church despite thousands of petition signatures because they had no clout, it was the massing of thousands of bodies that made the bishop and the politicians, from the mayor on down, change their minds.

Hilda Portillo, who lived a rough row of stumps, despite being a widow working to support a family also found time to be involved in many community projects as well as soliciting support for the United Farm Workers union. Her biggest contribution was her involvement in averting the demolition of the church.

Within the 300-odd pages of this book is an encapsulated history of the Maxwell Street area. The life stories of Harold, Florence, Nate and Hilda provide a strong human interest documentation of a once vibrant urban area.

While there have been conflicts among the diverse ethnic elements, it was a unique neighborhood. The Italians who still live in the periphery somehow learned to live with black housing projects next to them. The city has permitted a "New Maxwell Street" on Canal Street, a half mile east of the old location, but unlike the old market where vendors set up their space free of charge, the new market charges a daily fee of \$30. Very few of the former vendors can afford to pay what they would be lucky to make in one day. Consequently, the new market is but a sanitized, watered-down version. In our Freedomland culture, the spirit of nostalgic sentimentality will substitute with a weak imitation.

While exploring but one facet of the gentrification process that is sweeping our cities, this book eloquently points out the workings of our present capitalist system, where profits take precedence over human needs.

Chinese 'slave ship' in Angola

Workers on a ship anchored in the port of Luanda complain of slave-like conditions on board the Chinese-owned Green Coast. The ship has been in Luanda Bay since May last year, and is being refurbished as a floating hotel.

Many of the Chinese crew members have been on board the ship for more than a year, forbidden from going ashore. One worker says he was "ferociously beaten" when he objected to the conditions.

"I was threatened with death if I did not shut my mouth," he added. "I was told I was to be strangled, and thrown over the side of the ship, so deep that even the sea spirits would not be able to find me."

The International Transport Workers Federation's affiliate in Angola was denied access to the ship. The ITF contacted maritime authorities in Panama, where the ship is registered, but the Panamanians have been unable to contact the company which owns the vessel. It is registered at an address in Hong Kong, but when the ITF representative in Hong Kong visited that address, the office appeared to have been abandoned.

Boycott Krug

Production workers at California's Charles Krug Winery have been locked-out since July 3, after they unanimously rejected a contract offering lower wages, subcontracting, and eroded seniority rights. The Peter Mondavi family, owners of Krug, responded by locking the 40 workers out of their jobs.

Workers are trying to organize a boycott of Krug and Mondavi wines. Unionists have been showing up in Krug's tasting room to voice their displeasure with union-busting.

books rebelion rebelion workers

Celebrate Women's History Month



The Rebel Girl, An Autobiography: My First Life (1906 - 1926)

By Elizabeth Gurley Flynn paperback, 351 pp. \$10.00

Iron in Her Soul: Elizabeth

Gurley Flynn & the American Left

By Helen C. Camp

hardcover, 396 pp. Special price: \$16.00

Words on Fire: The Life and
Writing of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn

Edited by Rosalyn Fraad Baxandall paperback, 302 pp. Special price: \$10.00

Fiery orator and Wobbly organizer, a leader of IWW's Spokane free speech fight and of the union's famous Lawrence, Paterson, and Passaic strikes, in and out of jail, founding member of the ACLU, Chair of the American

Passaic strikes, in and out of jail, founding member of the ACLU, Chair of the American Communist Party the last three years of her life, and the inspiration for Joe Hill's classic 'The Rebel Girl,' Elizabeth Gurley Flynn has long been an icon for radical women, and her autobiography a must read for all self-respecting organizers. Two more books on Flynn (1890-1964), by Camp and Baxendaal, round out the picture. Each is carefully researched and written in an accessible style. Camp covers Flynn's equally colorful personal and political lives, the latter a reflection of the ups and downs of the American left over five decades. Baxandaal's book provides a fine 72-page biography, followed by reprints of many of the Rebel Girl's best articles, essays, poems and letters, each with a brief, but very useful, introductory note on the historical context.

Get all three Gurley Flynn books for just \$30.00!

Sweatshop Warriors: Immigrant Women Workers Take On the Global Factory.

By Miriam Ching Yoon Louie. paperback, 306 pp. \$18.00

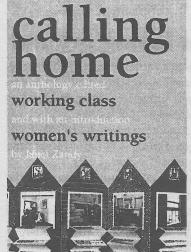
For every Gurley Flynn and Norma Rae, there are thousands of unknown women shopfloor warriors. Miriam Ching Yoon Louie's new book is a mix of vibrant first-person oral histories recounting the harrowing experiences of immigrant Chinese, Mexican and Korean women sweatshop workers in the USA, and of their admirable and



often politically sophisticated efforts to organize and fight back against their exploiters, along with commentary and analysis by Louie. Particular attention is paid the role of community-based workers' centers, whose success in uniting women across historical race, class, nation and generation fault-lines has lessons for traditional organizig strategies well beyond predominently female sweatshop industries.

Office Politics: Computers, Labor, and the Fight for Safety and Health By Vernon L. Mogensen paperback 223 pp. \$10.00

Office work in the industrialized west has been transformed by the advent of the desktop computer. Most video display terminal workers are low-paid, non-unionized women. Mogensen argues that the work they do has facilitated employers' routinization of office tasks, export of work by satellite to low-wage, non-union offshore sites, de-skill workers, and monitor their productivity. The women themselves face new (and widespread) health and safety problems, some of which have been swept under the carpet by governments and employers, and ignored by unions. Useful stuff for white-collar wage slaves and organizers alike.



Calling Home: Working Class Women's Writings

Edited by Janet Zandy. Available in hardcover or paperback 366 pp. \$10.00

Zandy's book brings together a collection of 69 mostly American, but ethnically, racially and geographically diverse essays, stories, poems and oral histories about, and in large part by, working-class women. Some of the writers are young, others long dead, some well known (Meridel Le Sueur, Mother Jones, Margaret Randall, Andre Lourde, Marge Piercy, et al.), others less known or hitherto virtually unknown. The pieces cover upbringing, work experiences, cultural roots, sex, childbirth, marriage, old age, strikes, revolution, and more — all from a women's perspective.

Global Workers Organizing

Made in Indonesia by Dan La Botz

A dynamic new labor movement emerged in Indonesia in the 1990s, helping to bring down the brutal Suharto dictatorship in 1998. Through personal interviews with the activists who are leading the rebirth of struggle for democratic rights in the world's fourth-largest country, La Botz draws valuable lessons for workers seeking to build international labor solidarity.

Allies Across the Border: Mexico's "Authentic Labor Front" & Global Solidarity By Dale Hathaway This first book on Mexico's pioneer independent labor federation, the Authentic Labor Front (the FAT), shows how activists are gaining strength in coalition with their "allies across the border." It also offers a description of Mexican history, explaining how globalizing the economy undermined workers' wages. It celebrates the organizing tactics both within plants and across borders that have given new hope to workers.

288 pp \$19.00

Union Democracy

Democracy Is Power: Rebuilding Unions from the Bottom Up by Mike Parker & Martha Gruelle. This book offers practical ideas of how the rank and file can run unions. Major discussion of Teamsters for a Democratic Union experiences in this area. 254pp \$17.00

Labor History

Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology

Compiled and edited by Joyce L. Kornbluh Culled from Wobbly periodicals from the movement's founding in 1905 to the present, Rebel Voices presents pamphlets, stories, songs, poems, courtroom testimony, skits, cartoons and illustrations that bring the story of the "minutemen of industrial unionism" to life in native accents. – Detroit Labor News \$24.00

The Autobiography of Mother Jones by Mary Harris Jones. This reprint of the autobiography of "the most dangerous woman in America" comes accompanied by several extra goodies: a forward by Meridel LeSueur, an afterward by IWW historian Fred Thompson, a Mother Jones article from 1901, and a tribute by Eugene Debs. Jones (1837-1930) was a union organizer, a co-founder of the IWW in 1905, and a militant in countless other struggles. \$12.00

Strike! by Jeremy Brecher A history of American workers' struggle from a working-class viewpoint, arguing that class upsurges are based in everyday life and rank- and-file initiative. While this edition is somewhat less optimistic than the original, it still provides rich detail of workers' rebellions throughout American history, and abundant evidence for the proposition that workers are fully capable of making our own history, should we set our minds to the task.

IWW Literature

Little Red Songbook 36th Edition

103 labor songs to fan the flames of discontent from around the world, with music. Includes songs by Joe Hill, Billy Bragg, Anne Feeney, Utah Phillips, and more. \$10.00

One Big Union An introduction to the structure, methods and goals of the Industrial Workers of the World. \$2.00

The General Strike by Ralph Chaplin The classic text – a call for organization. **\$2.00**

Organizing Help

A Troublemaker's Handbook: How to Fight Back Where You Work-and Win! by Dan La Botz. An encyclopedic work on worker initiative and organizing on the job. Shows that sitdown strikes still aren't dead and immigrant workers can be organized.

262pp \$17.00

The New Rank and File

by Staughton and Alice Lynd

With this inspiring collection of interviews with working class organizers from many facets of the international labor movement, the Lynds demonstrate the type of grassroots approach that we need if we are to build the strength to win against a global, wealthy and well-armed foe. Directed at two groups – rank-and-file workers and young people entering the labor movement – this book directly takes on the ideology of business unionism and offers hope and ideas for democratic, solidarity unionism.

Cool Stuff

Strobing Bike Lights Two-inch red reflectors printed with the IWW's logo. Clips onto the belt or pocket. **\$4.50**

Music for Rebel Workers compact Discs Anne Feeney: Have You Been to Jail for Justice? 16 fightin' songs \$15

Don't Mourn - Organize!

14 songs by and about Joe Hill, labor martyr.
Includes performances by Billy Bragg, Utah Phillips,
Pete Seeger, Hazel Dickens, and Paul Robeson \$17

Bucky Halker: Don't Want Your Millions
Includes little-known songs such as "New Made
Graves of Centralia" & "Death of Mother Jones."
Also features Wob classics "Rebel Girl" & "Dump
the Bosses" and spoken word by Studs Turkel. \$15

Ani DiFranco & Utah Phillips

Fellow Workers: A musical stage set by Ani & friends on which Utah tells stories of the American workers' plight and their struggle for rights as the nation developed. **\$17**

The Past Didn't Go Anywhere: Ani remixes Utah's stories from live recordings, a terrific marriage of electronic, beat-driven music and folktelling traditions.

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General strike closes Nigeria

A two-day general strike brought the country to a standstill, despite a court order outlawing the action and the arrests of Nigerian Labour Congress leaders. The strike was called to protest an 18 percent hike in fuel prices.

Nigerian police arrested NLC leader Adams Oshiomhole and nine other union officials on the first day of the strike, Jan. 16, charging them with "unlawful assembly and inciting the general public against the government." Police fired tear gas and bullets at 500 workers in the capital city of Abuja. Police demanded the strikers report to work, they responded with chants of "We no go go, We no go go."

In Lagos, the streets were deserted and shops closed. The BBC reported that what is usually one of Africa's most congested cities was completely empty, with just rubbish blowing in the wind. The stoppage also shut down most provincial cities, including Ibadan, Kaduna, Kano, Makurdi and the oil city of Port Harcourt.

While the government and international finance agencies have long insisted on higher fuel prices, workers have repeatedly forced them to back down. The IMF and World Bank are now refusing to consider measures to ease the \$30 billion debt rung up by the country's previous military dictatorship until the fuel subsidies are eliminated.

Oshiomhole was released January 18, after the union agreed to suspend the general strike pending legal action to overturn the injunction.

Guatemala: Labor unions under siege

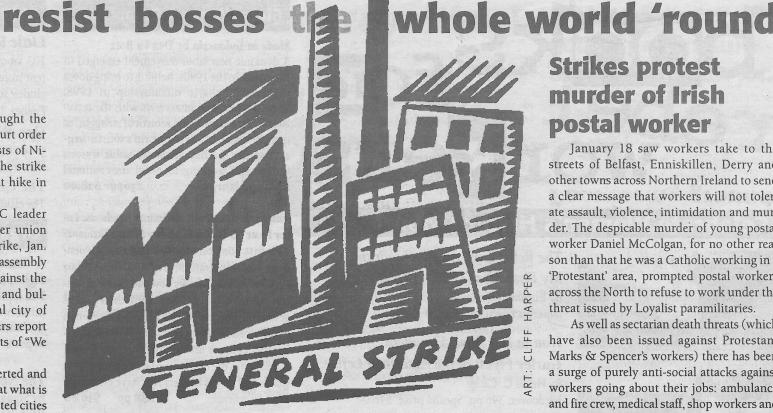
A scathing report from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions condemns the Guatemalan government's indifference in the face of escalating harassment, violence and murder against union activists.

Although the government relaxed some of its most severe restrictions on union rights, many violations of labor rights, such as a provision prohibiting solidarity strikes, are still very much in effect. However, "while these legislative restrictions have played a major part in the oppression of workers and trade unions in Guatemala, the lack of implementation and enforcement of laws and the ineffective defence of rights mandated by these laws has been a far more serious problem."

Proof of government indifference and negligence abounds: in one particular hacienda 67 court rulings to reinstate illegally fired workers were ignored. Violence, intimidation and murder are worsening, the report continues. In one incident, after 900 banana workers from the SITRABI union were illegally dismissed from plantations operated by Bandegua (a subsidiary of Del Monte), 200 armed paramilitaries assaulted a union office, held the leaders at gunpoint, and forced them to sign resignation letters and make a radio broadcast calling off a demonstration. These events took place within 400 metres of a police station; not only did the police fail to intervene, they did not even attempt an investigation into the incident until compelled to do so by public pressure.

Export processing firms, known as maquilas, are notorious for anti-union behaviour, to such an extent that there are currently no collective agreements between employers and any of the more than 80,000 workers in this sector. Factories often close down shortly after the formation of a union, and move production elsewhere.

Child labor and sexual harassment and abuse of women workers are also rampant. In one notable incident, women employees in a textile maquiladora were reportedly forced to put condoms on their boss.



Russian labor code strips worker rights

BY CURTIS VAUGHAN

In mid-December the Russian Parliament approved final amendments to the new Russian Labor Code. Russian President Vladimir Putin immediately signed the document, which went into effect February 1.

Demonstrations were held throughout Russia against aspects of the new law that will only further degrade the rights and conditions for labor, as well as against the government's failure to index salaries to inflation. The All-Russia Committee for United Action for Progressive Labor Legislation organized protest actions and conferences, as well as a picket of the Parliament on the day of actual voting.

Russian airline dispatchers staged a twoday fast in protest. Whereas it is illegal for Russian airline dispatchers to strike, union members cleverly used a legal mechanism to down tools: by law, airline dispatchers are not permitted to work if they have not eaten. Their union used this same tactic last sum-

In addition to changes made in the first and second readings of the new labor code (see July '01 IW), the finalized version introduces provisions for short-term labor contracts. This makes it possible to hire retirees on a short-term basis, to hire persons who will work in areas where the necessary work period will be less than one year (provided this is connected with the expansion of operations), or to hire persons in companies where there are less than 40 employees. It's bad enough that the retired workers can be exploited under short-term contracts, but companies are sure to exploit the opportunities provided under short-term contracts in hiring individuals on the basis that they are expanding operations, whether they are or not.

An additional blow to workers' rights includes restrictions on the right to strike, which have been expanded to include employees in municipal water and heating supply. Also, under the new amendments, a strike is considered legal provided more than half of the employees of a company first meet with the director and management in order to vote on strike demands. Then negotiations must be held, followed by another meeting, again with the director, in order to prevent a possible strike.

There are, however, some provisions for striking. Specifically, if salaries are not paid in 15 days. However, even this right is limited by the requirement stipulating that a letter must be directed to the company manager on the day the strike is to begin.

The struggle over the code helped spark the Jan. 12 founding of the Russian Labor Party by the trade unions SotsProf and Defense of Labor (Zashchita Truda), as well as a number of other unions representing dockers, airline dispatchers, teachers and miners.

Oleg Shein, a leading member of the Defense of Labor trade union and deputy to the Russian Parliament, was elected leader of the new party.

The Siberian Confederation of Labor (SKT) did not participate in the establishment of the new party, as it is an anarchosyndicalist organization which, much like the IWW, does not officially participate in political organizations. Some of its members, however, did take part in activities connected with the Labor Party's founding congress. SKT member Vasily Starotsin expressed both pessimism and optimism over the its establishment. On the one hand, the creation of the Labor Party is a reformist action: it is a party that will seek to garner votes in order to put its members into parliamentary bodies. This distracts workers from revolutionary means to overthrowing capitalism and instead pulls them toward electoralism. The fact a number of radical unions from the Urals and Siberia have joined in the party, however, may help to keep the new party tuned to workers' interests. Such groups may prove particularly valuable in holding the party to one of its statutes, which states that the Russian Labor Party will support all labor actions - illegal or not.

Solidarity actions for Korean unionists

Unionists in over 30 countries converged on Korean embassies and consulates Jan. 22 to denounce the imprisonment of unionists in Korea and demand the immediate release of KCTU president Dan Byung-ho, KCTU-KMWF President Mun Sung-hyun, and all imprisoned unionists.

In South Africa the metalworkers' union NUMSA organised a protest in which more than 500 participated. Dozens of protests were organized across India. Seventy unionists picketed outside the South Korean Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Hundreds picketed the Korean embassy in Moscow. And in Indonesia some 1,000 unionists took part in a demonstration.

Indian milk bosses begin paying workers in butter

Bosses at a milk factory in India have started paying workers 10% of their salaries in butter. Employees at the Gwalior Milk Cooperative Union in Madhya Pradesh will get up to 15kg of butter a month.

A factory spokesman told the Aaj Kal newspaper: "It is tempting for workers to blow salaries on booze and other unnecessary things. The butter will least make their wives and children happy."

While this concern for workers' families is touching, one wonders whether the landlord will be willing to take the rent out in

Strikes protest murder of Irish postal worker

January 18 saw workers take to the streets of Belfast, Enniskillen, Derry and other towns across Northern Ireland to send a clear message that workers will not tolerate assault, violence, intimidation and murder. The despicable murder of young postal worker Daniel McColgan, for no other reason than that he was a Catholic working in a 'Protestant' area, prompted postal workers across the North to refuse to work under the threat issued by Loyalist paramilitaries.

As well as sectarian death threats (which have also been issued against Protestant Marks & Spencer's workers) there has been a surge of purely anti-social attacks against workers going about their jobs: ambulance and fire crew, medical staff, shop workers and transport staff. Bus drivers struck between Christmas and New Year's to protest being subjected to assault and attacks.

The action was originally called as a halfday stoppage, from noon to midnight, but this was later reduced to a token two-hour strike, an arrangement made above the heads of workers on the ground. Most churches and local politicians came out in support of the rally. Even business organizations expressed their support, but of course had grave reservations about a total stoppage.

The presence of the politicians whose sectarian approach to politics creates exactly the climate for sectarian strife to flourish was ironic to say the least.

Extremely bad weather on the day meant a lower turnout than originally expected, but Belfast city centre was still packed with tens of thousands of people carrying union banners and placards. The crowd included workers from the public and private sectors. Shops and offices closed down. People attended with or without their employer's consent (many employers 'allowed' their staff to attend, but without pay).

The announcement of the action had seen the threat against postal workers lifted (posties having returned to work the day before the rally) and the apparent disbandment of the terror group that had issued the threats to postal workers, teachers and others. This was because of the outrage of workers across N. Ireland.

IWW members distributed thousands of leaflets to the crowd which called for a workplace-based campaign against violent attacks

"The bosses, police and sectarian politicians cannot protect us... Considerations of budget and finance take precedence over the lives and safety of workers... The only strength we have is industrial strength. Attacks on workers will only stop when workers take action in solidarity with each other. This means the withdrawal of services. It may seem harsh, but only when we force people to put pressure on those within their communities to stop the attacks will we see any real results. The only way we can put pressure on hoods, whether paramilitaries or simply anti-social, is through strike action. Enough is enough."

Poor losing ground

Low-paid workers are falling further behind, according to a new study by Australian unions. Some 1.4 million workers saw their real incomes fall last year because pay hikes did not keep pace with inflation; and 60 percent of workers in the lowest pay categories suffered real wage cuts.

While the average wage hike awarded by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission was just 2.5 percent (as against a 3.1 percent inflation rate), senior managers received increases averaging 5 percent before bonuses and other incentive pay.